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44 BROAD ST., NEW YORK.



THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF
CLEVERNESS

Vol. XVI

MAY, 1905

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"THE SMART SET" FOR JUNE

A delightful novelette will be the leading feature of the June "SMART SET," a story full of humor and clever dialogue. It is entitled,

"ON THE NEWPORT ROAD," By Sewell Ford

There will be thirteen short stories in the June number, every one of which will reach the high standard that the magazine has established. Among the authors are Edith Rickert, Edwin L. Sabin, Gertrude Lynch, Henry Sydnor Harrison, Anne O'Hagan and Anna A. Rogers.

An important article will be contributed, called

THE ART OF GIVING GRAND OPERA,

By Heinrich Conried

The poetry will be from such writers as Bliss Carman, Theodosia Garrison, Arthur Stringer, John Vance Cheney, Wallace Irwin, Elsa Barker and Ethel M. Kelley.

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THE SMART SET

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"THE SMART SET" FOR JULY

One of the foremost writers of the day will contribute her most important novel to the July number. It is a story of a party of Americans touring in Spain, and is written with all that charm and distinction which readers have come to expect from the author.

"THE TRAVELING THIRDS," By Gertrude Atherton

Mrs. Atherton's novel sets a remarkably high standard, yet the short stories in the July number fully sustain the reputation which the magazine has gained for delightful fiction. Among the authors may be mentioned Harold MacGrath, Beatrix Demarest Lloyd, Ellis Parker Butler, Emma Wolf, Frederic Taber Cooper and Gilbert Frankau (son of "Frank Danby").

The essay will be from the pen of Edgar Saltus and entitled, "The Importance of Being Somebody." Verse of a high order will appear by Gelett Burgess, Frank Dempster Sherman, Theodosia Garrison, Virginia Woodward Cloud and Carolyn Wells.

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THE AUGUST SMART SET

The coming number will open with a novel dealing with one of the most interesting periods of American history, that of the Civil War. It is a love story, the scenes of which are laid in and about Richmond in the stirring days of 1865. The action is rapid, and the historical events serve merely as a background for an intense and dramatic tale. It is entitled,

"THE CARLYLES," By Mrs. Burton Harrison

Each of the short stories in the August number will reveal its author at his best. There will be a romantic tale by Richard Le Gallienne; a child story by Elizabeth Jordan; a humorous bit by Henry Sydnor Harrison; a monologue by May Isabel Fisk, and strong character studies by Edna Kenton and Emery Pottle.

The essay will be by Maurice Francis Egan, and called "The Internal Feminine."

Ethel Watts Mumford, Frank Dempster Sherman, Arthur Stringer, Tudor Jenks and Mildred I. McNeal will contribute the verse.

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THE VISIONISTS

By Gelett Burgess

FOR several moments nobody spoke. The five sat about the table staring at the dice upon the green baize cover. Nomé had thrown double-six; the number was not only decisive as to its choice of her, but in its definite extreme it seemed to affirm that no one else could possibly have been selected by Destiny. She gazed at the little cubes with wide eyes, her lips apart, and her hand laid upon her breast to still the beating of her heart. It was like a sentence of death—as if she were suddenly picked off and left alone, while the universe receded from her. But she did not blench.

Irma Strieb watched her jealously from beneath heavy auburn brows, biting her lip to conceal its sullen droop. Little Ospovat had turned clay-white about the mouth and stared glassily, as if he were about to faint. O'Brien, the Fenian, folded his arms and waited, but the beads of sweat upon his temples showed how sensitive he was to the tensivity of the situation. Old Mangus, at the head of the table, pulled at his shaggy, unkempt beard, sucked at his pipe, and stared at Nomé. The dirty red fez on his head nodded slowly.

The light from the single window toward the west, casting each face into shadow, emphasized the characteristics of the group. O'Brien looked more like a bull than ever, Mangus more like a bear. Ospovat's mingled strength and weakness, affection and determination, his timidity ever lashed by his will, his effeminacy and his courage—all were plainly modeled upon his features. Irma Strieb's

harsh, mannish countenance was hardened by envy in that revelation. Nomé alone, sitting with her back to the light, shone in suffused color, with a radiant charm that penetrated the half-light and made itself felt, though shrouded from distinct vision. Behind the table the room was already dusky, and showed only a vague disorder—the cheap couch, the lithographs on the walls, and a few scattered papers on the floor making spots of color against the dingy background of gray wall-paper and dull, ragged carpet. A little wooden Swiss clock upon the mantel ticked busily on.

Mangus was the first to break the silence. He shook his gray head and growled through his beard: "I'm sorry it had to be a woman. This is a man's work!"

The color flashed into Nomé's cheek as she turned to him with new spirit. He put a hand on her arm, adding, "It's all right, Nomé; of course we can trust you, only—" Breaking off, he went to the sideboard, filled a glass with brandy, and brought it to her. Irma was still sullenly staring, and O'Brien's great mouth had fallen open like a slaving dog's. Little Ospovat's muscles were twitching.

Nomé put the glass away from her with a gesture of disdain. "Do you think—do you dare to think that I'm less able than a man to do the work?" she demanded proudly.

"Drink this!" Mangus commanded. "We'll talk afterward!"

"Give it to Ospovat—he needs it more than I do!" was her scornful reply.

The little Jew sprang to his feet.

"Oh, Nomé, Nomé, I can't bear it! If it had only been I!" Then he sank into his chair again and dropped his head on his arms.

Nomé's eyes softened.

"One would think we had met to form a literary club!" Irma Strieb sneered. "What did you expect, Ospovat—to do what we have to do with cologne water? You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs! What are you whining at?"

"It's a serious business, just the same," O'Brien broke in. "It'll take a bit of doing, I'm thinking. You all know me, but I don't mind saying it makes me feel solemn."

"It's horrible!" cried Ospovat. "I wouldn't mind if I only had it to do myself, but to stand and look on—"

"There'll be enough to do for us all," Mangus growled. "We've only just begun. There'll be danger enough to go round, I promise you! We haven't enlisted for this thing alone, have we? It's the first stroke that tells, though, and it must be given hard and clean. I'm glad the day has come at last when we can stop talking and do things!" He took a packet of papers from his pocket and began to arrange them upon the table. Then he looked up. "You'd better all go, now," he added. "I've got something to say to Nomé."

The three arose awkwardly to take their leave, all self-conscious and embarrassed, their eyes fastened with a new curiosity upon the tall, dark, beautiful girl who had been their comrade for so long, now to go to instant peril, perhaps her death, alone.

The burly, sentimental Irishman went to her and wrung her hand in a strong grip, his eyes filling as he looked into hers. "Good-bye, Nomé, my girl," he said, choking. "I wish to God it had been me, but there's plenty left for us to do, as Mangus says. I've always been proud of you, Nomé—you'll do us credit, I'm sure. Come back to us safe—if you can!" He ran his big hand through his red hair and gazed at the wall, stupidly. Then, with a cough, he turned, went

out the door, and stumbled down one flight of stairs; there to wait for Irma.

Irma Strieb's farewell was without sentiment. Her cold, gray-blue eyes did not moisten as she looked at Nomé for what would be, in all probability, the last time. The two women had always been at variance, and even physically they presented a contrast that Irma had always resented. Irma Strieb was a German of the most uncompromising plainness, unaccented by color or delicacy of feature. Her lack of comeliness was made up for, in a way, by an almost masculine strength, shown in her firm, heavy, wilful jaw, her yellow teeth and bushy yellow hair. The lines of her figure were all flattened where Nomé's were curved in full development, and her angular joints were ill disguised by a stiff, plain and unbecoming costume.

"You won, as usual, Nomé," she said. "Of course you'll become our heroine. Someone has got to get the glory, I suppose. But so long as the Cause needs to have drudgery done, I'll be here to do it. It doesn't matter. We must have a few good wheel-horses, even if they can't address meetings and electrify audiences."

"You have already done far more than I can ever do; you have been in the Movement since I was a child," said Nomé, steadily facing Irma's look. "Chance has given me this to do, and I shall do it as well as I can, but I wish I had done half as much as you have done, through all those first dark days, when you were almost alone!"

"Well, good-bye, then," said Irma coldly. "Come, Ospovat, let's go now!" She cast a contemptuous look at the little Russian. Then, as he shook his head sadly, she left the room deliberately, to meet O'Brien on the floor below.

Little Ospovat crept to Nomé's side like a hound and kissed her hand repeatedly, almost prostrated by his emotion and the intensity of his Slavonic temperament. Nomé put her hand on his curly head, then raised him, to kiss him upon the cheek. He

was trembling violently, far more distraught than she. He left her without a word, his eyes on her to the last. The door closed softly behind him.

There was a hush in the cold, drearily furnished room, and the twilight had fallen, filling the place with shadows. Mangus still sat at the table, intent upon his papers. Nomé walked to the window to watch the orange light of the western sky flooding the jumble of London roofs and chimney-pots. She was calm now, but before Mangus spoke she must be calmer still. For the credit of her sex, for her own justification, she must not only carry this thing through successfully, but brilliantly, gallantly, as a man would do it.

She had been for several years in sympathy with the Movement, but had joined this most radical branch only a few months previously. Since entering the Circle she had carried all before her—all, that is, but Mangus, the brains and will of the conspiracy. Little Ospovat had been won at a glance, and O'Brien almost as easily; most of the others had been fascinated by the beautiful, spirited American girl who had so enlivened their meetings with a new charm and a new romance. Her enthusiasm had been picturesque and piquant. She had given her mind, her energy as well as her fortune to the Cause, but Mangus was too wise to trust anyone without a trial. She felt his distrust even when it was not expressed, and his apparent admiration of her beauty was scarcely less distasteful to her than his cynical comments upon her flamboyant emotions.

He looked up from his papers, at last, to see Nomé silhouetted against the dormer window, dark, gracile, ultra-feminine. As he watched her, she was never quite still. Every passing thought was written upon her face; her expression changed continually, urged by her conflicting emotions. Her hands worked convulsively, reflexing sudden moods of thought, her breath came suddenly or stopped as,

in the intensity of her feeling, she went over the past and present and future. Woman as she was in intellect, she was but a child in emotional schooling—that was, perhaps, her final charm, the ingenuousness which was so marked as almost to seem like an affectation.

He went up to her and laid a hand upon her shoulder gently. She started, as if she had been summoned from the depths of consciousness, looked at him with a startled expression, then smiled graciously. She seemed younger than usual tonight. This last hour, when the theories of her life were to be unleashed into action, had not as yet touched her nerves.

"I didn't mean to doubt you, Nomé," he began. "We all know how true you are, none better than I, who have watched you from the beginning. You're prepared to die for the Cause, and you'll do your part as well as you can. It's only this that worries me—you're a woman, and I fear you've not yet killed that woman's heart of yours. You must kill that heart, Nomé, before you leave this room tonight. You may think you have given yourself to the Movement, body and soul; you may not have had a thought outside this matter since you first came to us, but you're a woman still—I could tell that by the way you kissed little Ospovat. A woman may often do bigger things than a man, but she often does littler things, too. You've done with the woman's battle of the heart against the brain. You've surrendered all right to a personal life. You belong to the Cause, without a will of your own, without desires or sympathies or emotions apart from the righting of a great wrong. As a nun gives herself to God when she takes the veil, so you gave yourself to Humanity when you took the oath. Your life may be wrecked this night, but the Cause, God bless it, will go on!"

She had kept her eyes on the sanguine glory of the sunset as he spoke, but she turned, now, her face bathed in the reddening light, her eyes on fire.

"Do you need to tell me this?" she cried. "Do you need to bolster up my courage—*mine*? Don't I know all this as well as you?" she exclaimed almost fiercely.

He met her gaze calmly. "How did you happen to join the Movement?" he inquired.

The color surged to her face, and she put her hand to her heart. "Because—because I became interested in the Cause—because I believed it was right and just and noble—why do you ask me? Why does anyone join, else? Why did you?"

"Have you ever had a love-affair, a serious one?" Mangus put the question as one who has the right to ask, and, in the conflict of wills, he won.

"Yes," she whispered, looking down.

"It was an unhappy affair?"

"Yes," she repeated.

"And for that reason, perhaps, you entered the Movement?"

"Yes," a third time.

Mangus brought his hand down on the table with a shock that startled the girl. "There you are again! It's always the way! Why can't a woman devote herself to a noble, righteous thing, because of its own compelling influence, because of its own human demand, instead of waiting till her heart is broken? I tell you, girl, that when a woman's heart is broken her will is broken, too! Otherwise she'd conquer this fetish worship of the emotions. A woman with a broken heart is never safe. It's well called a broken heart—she is weakened by it, in will and in mind. God! I've seen them—women studying the training for nurses in the hospitals, going in for philanthropy, sociology or religion, or joining the Movement—all on account of cardiac fracture! Using the finest and noblest of human endeavors as a mere anesthetic! Isn't our Cause sublime enough to attract one whole heart, one happy life, from pure altruistic motives? How can I trust a woman if there is even one man in the world who can call himself her master?"

"You know I am resolved!" Nomé

cried indignantly. "You know how I have burned at the thought of the injustice and the tyranny of all I see about me. You know how I hate the social system that forces this outrageous condition upon us—is not that enough?"

"Ah, that is not calmness, Nomé!" he replied. "You must forget all that now. It is true enough, but it is the talk for the platform, not for the thrower of a double-six. Keep to the scientific view. Our reform is inevitable—we do but make ready the day. This assassination must be differentiated from every sporadic attempt that has ever been made. It must be done with coolness and deliberation to have any effect. It must be one step in a chain of action, as mechanically performed as the stroke of the pen which drives the price of wheat up another point. You are not chosen to wreak poetic vengeance. Yours must not be the act of one burning with the wrongs of humanity, so much as the official act of a political plot, working logically to a positive end."

"I am in your hands," was Nomé's reply. "Have I not given my oath? You are dictator here. Command me!"

"Tell me something about your love-affair first."

Nomé spoke as to a confessor, rapidly and in a low voice. "He was George Camish, an Englishman, who expected before long to come into a title—I don't know what. I met him at home, in New York. I loved him, and thought he loved me. Then we quarreled, and since that I have never heard from him. That's all."

"But you cannot forget?" Mangus questioned coldly.

"No, I cannot forget." Nomé's words were scarcely audible.

"What if you were asked to kill him?"

"I should kill him."

There came a knock at the door. Mangus stalked to it in a rage. Little Ospovat, white-faced and trembling, a ridiculous figure in his large hat and

ill-fitting overcoat, was upon the threshold.

"I thought you would be through, and Nomé would be alone," he whimpered. "I wanted to see her once more—for the last time!"

"Get out!" Mangus cried fiercely.

Ospovat retreated, with his bright eyes still searching the gloom.

"There's another of your little tup-penny love-affairs!" said Mangus. "How dares anyone bring his personal feelings into this room at such a time! Yet little Ospovat there, more a woman than you are, is more a man than some of us. I'd be surer of him than of O'Brien. There's stuff in that little Jew, for all his sentiment. I'll use him well, when *his* time comes!"

"He's a mere child," said Nomé, "but he's pure gold!"

"Gold!" muttered Mangus. "This is no esthetic Movement! What we want is steel, cold steel! Files and saws and knives and hammers are our tools. Phlebotomy, Nomé, phlebotomy is our game. Letting a little blood for the good of the race."

"Let us finish our business," pleaded Nomé, overcome by his taunts. "Whether I am worthy or not, this night will prove. If I still have a heart I have honor as well, and my mind is clear. I have given myself, my life, my soul to this Cause. I can strike, were it my mother who was to be the victim!"

"Listen, then," Mangus said, growing more gentle. "You're young. You've had your longings and your illusions; this is your chance for eternal peace. I envy you that. Let me give you what I can of my own strength, for you'll need all of your own, and more. One last word, then, before the final instructions."

"Our business tonight is to shock the whole world—to bring the land to its senses, if it has any—to compel men to gaze at a great evil, that it may, in time, be righted. By means of what men call a crime we shall force the recognition and discussion of what is, in the eyes of God, a far greater crime, the enslavement of a whole people.

Ours is a war, and we employ the methods of warfare. Some believe that the general condition of mankind must needs improve slowly, laboriously, painfully, inch by inch, like the motion of a screw. We believe, you and I, that the only possible advance is by shock and conflict, by sudden leaps forward, like the wheel and ratchet, every step gained being a gain for all time. So civilization has always progressed by bloody wars, by fierce sacrifices of human life, by noble crimes. The man we have marked for death happens to be the one most in the way of liberty; yet it is not the man you are to kill, but the officer, the social system which he enforces. He may even be, according to his own standards and conventional moralities, good and just; but his life must be given that the people shall at last be free. His life—and perhaps yours!"

The dusk had grown closer, shrouding the chamber in gloom. Now Mangus arose and lighted the lamp. His manner changed. His speech was sharp and crisp as he spread the papers before her.

"See here. This is Westchester Square. You are to take your position here, where I have marked this cross, in the doorway of Number 11. Here is the Junior Arts Club, on the corner. At about one o'clock a man will come out of that club and walk across the square in your direction. You are to shoot that man. Wait till he is so near that you can't possibly miss him. Speak to him, if necessary, and fire at least three shots to make sure that the work is done."

"Who is he?" Nomé asked coolly.

"Lord Felvex, recently appointed Minister of Police. You will know him by a fur cap, a heavy frogged overcoat and a gold-handled stick. He wears a mustache. You can't mistake him, for we've made sure of his plans. He has agreed to meet someone in the vicinity at one o'clock tonight, and it's too near for him to need a cab."

Nomé took the pistol he handed her and watched him while he explained

its action. He loaded it carefully. Next, he went over the plan for her escape. It was not till then that her attention wandered. She would never reach that waiting cab, she knew, and that part of the plot did not interest her. It seemed base to discuss her own safety. She was resolved to die.

"It is strange that you should have been chosen for this work," Mangus remarked after all the details had been arranged. "Before the lots were drawn in the Central Circle I felt sure that you would be the one. When the dice were thrown here tonight, I knew as well as if I had been told, that you would throw the highest. And yet, I would have preferred a man—Ospovat, or O'Brien. I could have used you to better advantage elsewhere, and I assure you that your work would have been equally perilous."

Nomé resented the repetition of his suspicion the more that it was coupled with the hint in regard to her beauty. He had tried before to enlist her in the crafty diplomacy of the Circle, where her appearance could be used to advantage, but her pride in her own determination had always denied him. She did not wish to be regarded as a woman, fit only for a woman's work; she longed passionately for an equal chance with the rest to do all that required will and nerve. Yet she had never quite convinced Mangus of her strength. It was not enough for her, now, that she would prove herself in two hours; her vanity demanded that she should bring him to her feet immediately. She could not bear not to be, even now, the heroine, equal to him in determination and coolness. She had already begun to act, to take her pose before the world. A way came to her mind to compel his admiration.

"Suppose we play a game of chess," she suggested. "I have plenty of time yet, and we have never played off our rubber. Let's see which is the better man."

The two had played often and were about equal in skill. To concentrate her mind, now, in such a crisis of her life, upon the complex strategy of the

game was a *tour de force* that he knew how to admire. His own indomitable will could scarcely have gone further.

"Very well," he said, smiling in spite of himself at her ingenuous bid for admiration. "But I warn you, I'll not spare you. Take the white; I'm rather anxious to see your attack."

They were neither of them experts at chess, but had begun the study of it together and had succumbed together to its fascinations; both felt its excitement.

"It's a game of conspiracy," Mangus had often said, "and there's two kinds of conspirator. My kind is the Fabian policy—mobilize your force with deliberation, manoeuvre with discretion, await your chance to pierce the enemy's defense. Yours is the other sort—strike hard and fast, take chances, force the attack always and finish in a whirl of glory or in the dust of defeat. It's the game I'm interested in; it's the winning you care for. But we need both sorts in the Cause. The supreme conspirator has a dash of both in him—discretion and recklessness, and, above all, a sane, swift recognition of opportunity." So he watched eagerly tonight for the significant move which should disclose her opening.

His eye lit, and he smiled with satisfaction as her moves developed the Muzio gambit, with its bold initial sacrifice of the knight. He accepted her piece and awaited her attack upon his king's flank. The opening must be pressed home rapidly and vigorously to gain with an inferior force, and one error in the player's analysis of the situation, one misstep in tactics often forfeits the game. Mangus opposed her craftily, but her play was sure.

Nomé was more beautiful than usual tonight. It was "her day," as women say, and the excitement had given her a splendid color. She had taken off her stock and opened the top of her gown at the neck to give herself freedom. Mangus smiled as she rolled up the right sleeve of her shirt waist; Nomé's arm was perfect, and her one conscious coquetry was in the use of her hands.

Mangus reached over the board and felt her hand. "You're cold!" he said. "But, good God, what a beautifully feminine creature you are, Nomé! It is a pity to throw you away on a man's work. Oh, I could use those black eyes and that black hair where they'd cut keener than daggers! What do you say if now we rearrange matters?"

"Mate in three moves!" she announced icily.

"You've beaten me, Nomé!" he said, rising after a look at the board. "Chess is the next to the greatest game in the world—war is greatest. We'll see what skill you have at *that*."

He took up the revolver and examined it thoughtfully.

"I wonder if you'll be able to handle this as well as you handled your rooks," he said. "The question now is, can you press this trigger at just the right time and point this barrel in just the right direction—that the ratchet may slip forward another notch?"

II

FOR five minutes after Mangus had gone Nomé sat gazing out into the dark of the west, over the city roofs and the dull, sullen, smoke-stained walls, pierced with lighted windows. The old man's cynical distrust of women had put her on her mettle, and, although she had no distrust of herself, she longed to have it over.

It was with a shock that, since throwing the winning dice, she had awakened to a sense of the enormous difference between the work of an agitator and that of an active conspirator. She had so long practiced with the catchwords of the movement and had gone so often over the old, well-known arguments, that she had long ago come to believe herself a creature of action. The sacrifice for which she had long been ready had seemed like an accomplished fact—she saw no difference between the willingness to die and death itself, so commonplace had her heroics become in her mind.

But now—it was so different! The

crisis had come and she had been called upon to do actually what she had so often pictured herself as doing. Her time and place were set. It was for her to fall at this first ditch and let the Movement sweep on without her. The others would carry on the propaganda of the Cause, filling up the ranks where she had dropped. Ospovat, O'Brien, Irma Strieb, all would meet as usual in that room to plan new strokes, and, perhaps, go forth, one by one, to die like her. It seemed so hard that she could not do more, besides this night's work, for the Cause. She envied Mangus, not his safety, but his isolated supremacy in the Council, his prospect of seeing the Cause grow in power.

She was interrupted by a knock, and, before she had time to answer, little Ospovat crept into the room, apologetic and shrinking. He stumbled in a hole in the carpet and fell at full length. Nomé smiled to think that he was almost always either ridiculous or pathetic, and gave him a patronizing welcome. She was fond of him, but could never take him seriously; he was pure gold, as she had said, but he was, to her mind, but half a man—a child whose moods she was wont to indulge. But, after Mangus's insinuations, it heartened her to see someone who believed in her implicitly, as Ospovat always had done, always would do.

"I couldn't bear not to see you again, Nomé," he said. "And, oh, Nomé, I can't bear to have you die tonight! Nomé, Nomé, I have come to ask you something! Let me go in your place and do it! I am a man, and it does not matter about me—they can spare me so well—but you are so wonderful! You must not go, Nomé!"

He knelt before her, and she petted him like a sister. "It can't be, Ospovat," she said soothingly. "I have been chosen, and I must go. You know I have sworn not to disclose what I have to do tonight. How could I tell even you? I must do this thing. It is glorious, and I am happy to be able to give my life for the Cause!"

"Ah, but I am not happy!" he moaned, laying his head in her lap.

"Do you think I shall fail?" she inquired, knowing well what he would say, but longing for his trust.

"No! no!" he cried. "You will be a heroine! You cannot fail—you, who are so wonderful! But you are so beautiful, too!"

"Don't, Ospovat!" she exclaimed.

"And I love you—love you, Nomé!" he went on boldly.

"You must not say that!" she said, freeing herself from his hands. "What have you or I to do with love? Haven't you sworn that nothing shall come between you and the Cause? Haven't I? We have no right to any personal life, any personal taste, feeling or thought! You must not speak a word of this to me!"

"I will speak, Nomé—I must! It may be the last time I shall ever see you. I must tell you that I love you—that I have loved you ever since you came to us. You are a divine creature to me, so far above me that I want no return, no answer, even, only to let you know. And I cannot bear to have you die! You could never care for me, and so it is better, far better, that I should die, not you, who are so wonderful. If you should die, what would I do!"

"Poor boy, I am so sorry!" she said sadly. "But you must not talk so. It is decided, and it is wrong for you to distract me now, when I have so much to think of, when I need all my calmness to do what is to be done. You must throw yourself more into the Cause, and forget."

"Have you forgotten, Nomé?" he asked keenly.

"Forgotten what?"

"Forgotten your love, your heart, your sorrow."

"What do you know of that?"

"How do I know? Can I look at you and not see? Haven't I seen your eyes fill with tears and your hand go to your heart? You could not have that look in your face without having loved and suffered, as I suffer now. Look in my eyes, and you will

see the same look there. I know—how well I know! I do not expect you to care for me—I never expected it. I am only little Ospovat, the Russian Jew! But I love you, all the same; and loving you, I have understood you. Is it not true, Nomé?"

"Yes," she said, "it is true."

"Then you, too, can understand how hard it is for me to let you go to-night!"

"You *must* let me go!" she cried.

"Would you have me dishonored? You see for yourself how your words affect me, and you should not speak of this to me. I don't want to think of myself at all, tonight, least of all think of—what you have spoken of. I had to answer Mangus, and it nearly killed me! I can't bear it!"

"You will not let me go in your place?" he repeated.

"No, I cannot. I would not, if I could. I owe this to the Cause, and to myself, too, for I must be tried and proven, or what does all my work count for?"

"Let me go with you, then! Let me take the pistol and give myself up, while you escape. You could do so much for the Cause!"

"It is too late!"

He moaned, and threw himself into a seat by the table, dropping his head in his arms. She went up to him again, and touched him gently. "It is very sweet to have you love me so much, Ospovat," she said. "But I am past all that, and my heart is broken. I shall be glad to die."

"Is it so bad with you?" he said, looking up into her face. "He must have been wonderful, to inspire such a one as you to love him!"

"Indeed he was wonderful—to me."

"And he left you? How could anyone ever leave you!"

"We quarreled. Then he left. Sometimes I have thought that he quarreled on purpose, so that he might go without hurting me so much."

"Can't I do something for you, Nomé, before you go out into danger? I might take a message to him from you."

"No, that's useless. When he hears how I have died that will be message enough for him. He will know."

"It is well; I would kill him if I saw him."

"That would be a poor way to serve me," Nomé said, smiling sadly.

The little Swiss clock on the mantel struck midnight. The two listened, Ospovat trembling, till it had finished. Then Nomé looked at him meaningly. He rose and gazed at her fixedly, then knelt and kissed her hand.

"Farewell, Nomé!" he said quickly.

After he had gone she sat for some time listlessly, then arose with a brisk resolve. She put on her hat and coat and placed the revolver carefully inside her muff. Finally, turning out the light, she went downstairs and opened the front door on Fitzroy street. A cab had just passed. As it turned the corner into Grafton street, she walked slowly down the steps and across the pavement to the curb. Soon after the cab reappeared from the opposite direction and halted where she stood. Opening the door, without speaking to the driver, Nomé stepped in.

As the vehicle passed into Charlotte street, a little man, slinking in the shadow, ran out and swung himself on the rear of the cab. The driver did not notice.

III

It was nearly one o'clock when Nomé, having left the cab some blocks away and walked alone to the appointed spot, reached the shelter of the doorway where she was to await the Minister of Police.

The public-houses had closed, turning the last wayfarers upon the night. The streets were deserted now, unvisited except by the solitary policeman who proceeded silently down the rows of sleeping houses, illuminating the doors with his dark-lantern. From her post in the shadow no one was visible. Occasionally she heard the echoing, padded beat of horses' hoofs and the distant jangle of cab bells,

and then silence fell upon the place. The electric lamp in the little triangular square flooded the vicinity with light, the sizzling arcs casting an uncertain shadow of the standards, as the spark spluttered and burned violet again. The doorway where she stood was hid in darkness. Opposite her was the clubhouse, the cut-glass in its front doors sparkling with refracted rays.

A belated serving-maid passed, on the other side of the street, with her "follower." At the lower door of her house there was a colloquy in whispers. The man whistled, and, after a wait, an upper window was opened. A woman threw down a key, laughing aloud. The maid entered and her escort withdrew. The square was still again.

As Nomé waited there, revolver in hand, her mind was full of the advice Mangus had given her. His phrase—the ratchet and the screw—came back to her like a watchword. But the intellectual stigma he had put upon her sex still aroused her scornful resentment. She would prove its injustice. She thought of women whose example might inspire her—and she thought, too, of some whose hearts had triumphed over their heads, in the supreme trial. She recalled one such, in Germany, who had relinquished her purpose at the sound of a crying babe. What had become of her? What had life to offer for one so recreant to the trust of her one greatest moment?

But had Nomé herself killed her heart as Mangus had doubted? Indeed, had it not been killed for her when George Camish left her? How else could she have gone into the movement—how could she have taken the oath, if her heart had not been withered three years ago?

Quick, now! The door of the clubhouse opened and two men appeared. No, it was not the minister.

She must not allow her mind to wander. This was no time for subjective analysis, no time for her to doubt herself. The work tonight was the climax of her life. Nothing else

mattered, for she would prove herself. In another hour all would be answered.

Suddenly she noticed two men loitering on the opposite side of the street. She watched them curiously, nervously, thinking at first that they might be members of the Circle, ready to assist her escape. But all the prominent members of the Movement were already known to the police, and their appearance at this time would not only be dangerous to themselves but would endanger the success of the conspiracy. Her second thought was that the plot had become known, and that these men were detectives prepared to thwart her attack. The next instant, however, their true character was revealed in a series of rapid events.

Crossing the street together, they stationed themselves so near her that she could almost hear their whispered words. Then there was a subdued exclamation of attention as, across the square, the door of the clubhouse opened and a man appeared. Before her eyes had recognized the fur cap, the mustache and the frogged overcoat, her heart's beating and the choking in her throat had told her that it was the minister. She heard him call "Good night!" and the door was slammed. He walked rapidly across the square toward her. Nomé held her pistol ready, her finger trembling upon the trigger.

The men she had been watching were now between her and the approaching victim as he came on briskly, swinging his stick. Then, to her surprise and horror, the two, who had been pretending to light a cigarette one from the other, whirled upon Lord Felvex with violence. The attack was so rapid and so fierce that he was caught unprepared, and was quite at their mercy. He did not even cry out for help. He was struck down almost immediately, and then attacked with a ferocity so cruel that Nomé's blood boiled. She saw blow after blow rained upon him, then all thought of her own purpose was swept away in an overmastering desire to save him from this deadly peril. In another instant

he would have been beaten into insensibility.

She ran out with her revolver drawn, and, leveling deliberately at one of the footpads, fired. He fell in his tracks, and she turned instantly to the other. Lord Felvex had rolled over and was attempting to rise; Nomé caught one glance at his bleeding face. That sight so increased her excitement that her second shot went wild. In a flash the robber was upon her and felled her violently to the ground with a blow upon the chest. She fell upon her arm and head, and swooned.

When she came to herself little Ospovat was kneeling beside her, whispering wildly into her ear. There was a tumult in the square—a cordon of police was driving a gathering crowd back out of the way—orders were being cried out—men were running up from every direction. Across the street lighted windows were thrown up, and men and women were gazing down upon the trouble. What had happened? At first she was too faint and ill to remember.

Had the minister been killed? Had the ratchet slipped up another notch? Was she now the heroine of the Cause? Then her memory came back in a flood of shame at her failure—and came with a recurrence of the excitement she had felt when she saw Lord Felvex's face. Her head was resting upon an overcoat, she was bleeding, her left arm was numb, her chest filled with a stinging ache when she breathed, but she felt no cold, no pain worth troubling her—only the wretchedness of a wasted opportunity, a sense of failure, and, through it all, a wonder and a puzzled horror at the minister, at Lord Felvex whom she knew now so well! She wished that she had died.

"You couldn't help it, dear Nomé!" Ospovat was saying under his breath. "Of course there was no other way! I watched you from the corner, and I know you were ready. I shall tell them at the Circle—I shall say that you would have done it. Those damned robbers spoiled everything—

but you shall have another chance! I shall help you next time! I shall give my life with yours, Nomé."

He was wiping the blood from her face as he whispered, kissing her brow, chafing her wrists, abandoned to grief at the sight of her condition. Nomé had not strength enough to speak, scarcely enough to think upon the complication of her woes. She had failed, failed, failed! How Mangus would sneer at her! And Lord Felvex—she was too bewildered to follow out that thought.

Ospovat was torn from her side as two policemen brought up a surgeon from a house across the street. Nomé saw, languidly, as in a dream, that he had his nightshirt still on under his coat, and he wore no stockings. Then a voice—a voice that she knew so well!—thrilled her through the babel of noises.

"Never mind me! Let me alone, damn you! I can stand all right. Get a carriage and take that girl to my house. Send for Sir Thomas Burroughs immediately—don't wait for an ambulance! By Jove! that girl is a brick, whoever she is. She's to be taken direct to my house!"

IV

FOR three weeks Nomé was too ill to realize her position at the Felvex house; she saw no one but her physician and nurses. Intervals of fever prevented her from noticing the attentions by which she was favored, and in these times her mind reverted continually to the stress of thought which had immediately followed her adventure.

As soon as she began to recover her health and strength, however, she wondered at the consideration which she received. She was in a beautifully furnished room with alternate day and night nurses to wait upon her, often and most cordially visited by her doctor, the celebrated Sir Thomas Burroughs, who treated her with a cheerful and interested kindness that

charmed her. The table by her bed was kept constantly supplied with fresh flowers. Everything that she could wish for, or that could be anticipated for her, was done, with the exception that she received no information as to what had happened during the interval of her illness. There was something significant in the deference with which she was treated, and she could not quite understand it. The first message she received was from Lady Felvex, inquiring as to her health, and expressing a wish to call upon her. Then, little by little, she learned from her nurse how matters stood.

She had become a popular heroine. She was shown papers with accounts of the episode at Westchester Square, extolling her courage in defending the minister. His social and official prominence had combined with her own beauty to make the affair notorious. The illustrated weeklies contained pictures of the incident, with photographs of Lord Felvex. Here she read his biography, and some of the events in his past explained the reason for his behavior when she had known him in New York.

There, having refused to make use of his courtesy title of "Honorable" during his visit to the United States, he had been known by his family name of Camish. He had been engaged to the present Lady Felvex for four years, not having married her until he had come into his uncle's title. She understood, now, why he had invented their one-sided quarrel, why he had left her, why he had never spoken to her as she had hoped to have him speak. She had loved him, and no doubt he had become more and more fond of her. When he saw how matters were tending he had taken the most considerate way of parting with her. She had no reproaches for him; it was his right, for they had never come to any definite understanding. She had loved him and had gone more than halfway in the affair. There had been a swift, keen friendship. That was all, so far as he was concerned, though she had taken it much more seriously. It was

all simple enough, common enough; it was one of a thousand similar cases, yet her heart had broken.

No one, at first, knew who she was, for Lord Felvex had not had time to recognise her during the fracas that night, and she had few friends in London outside the Circle. This mystery had increased the picturesqueness of her situation and had stimulated the curiosity of the public. She began to receive hundreds of letters of congratulation. Flowers, fruits, delicacies and presents of all description were showered upon her by unknown admirers of her gallantry. It was apparent that she was no common woman of the streets, and it was surmised that she was an American, although the reason for her being in that vicinity, alone and armed, caused much inquisitive comment.

The iron entered Nomé's soul at the first realization of her anomalous situation. To have failed in her appointed purpose was agony enough for her proud spirit, but to receive this tribute of praise for an act which, to her, represented only her weakness, was an exquisite anguish.

With all the adulation which she had begun to receive, and which, as she became convalescent, she would receive in fuller measure, she must hold her tongue and play the hypocrite, humiliated by the cruel falsity and injustice of her part. She must bide her time; there were too many interests at stake for her to protest at her hostess's bounty. Not only the safety of her friends but the danger to the Cause itself kept her silent, and behind this was the chance for her own redemption—if she ever had the courage to redeem herself from this failure.

So she received the flattery and favors which were for her the bitterest mockery. She had been human enough to anticipate the notoriety that would become hers—the vilification, the persecution, the crown of thorns—but she would have had the glory, too, of having struck for Humanity, not this cheap romance of an accidental rescue. Harder to bear than this was the

thought of how the Circle would regard her action. The better part, including Mangus, perhaps, might admit that she did rightly, for the sordid crime of the footpads, dignified by no noble motive, unauthorized by any revolutionary tribunal, could surely mean nothing to the propaganda of the Cause.

Yet she knew that one faction at least—that to which O'Brien, the Fenian, belonged—would never forgive her. They held a personal quarrel with the minister who had stood in their way, and had made many of the Circle suffer. O'Brien himself had been warmly fond of her, but she knew his hot Irish blood; he was capable of turning on her the instant their wills diverged.

She could never show herself in the Circle until she had reinstated herself, in her own opinion and theirs, as a heroine. She had gone to her errand of death with confidence and determination and had failed; the next time, with the knowledge of her weakness of will, with the knowledge, too, of what Lord Felvex was to her, it would be intolerably harder. In the drama, in all the stories she had ever read, love had always conquered. Must it always be so? Could she not prove that there was something higher than love, something above duty, even—the divine principle of sacrifice?

So she went over it again and again, torturing herself with misgivings. The tumult in her soul kept her weak, and its symptoms of distress for awhile baffled her physician. But she was young and hardy, and day by day her strength slowly returned. There came a time, at last, when she was informed that Lady Felvex was to be admitted.

Nomé's hostess was a quiet, modest woman of thirty, with a plumpness that was still more girlish than matronly and a calmness that instantly inspired confidence. Her hair was dark and straight, simply arranged, without pretense to style; her eyes were clear, deep blue and steady. Her level brows and wide, well-cut mouth betokened great magnanimity and a

peace of mind that ill accorded with a certain awkwardness and carelessness in her carriage. She seemed serene in spirit and sure in thought, but self-conscious as to her physical appearance. The cordial friendliness of her manner seemed to be kept in check lest it should become too frank and candid.

She came directly to the girl, kissed her on the forehead, then sat down and took her hand.

"What can I say to you?" she said. "You who saved my husband's life! It was wonderful of you; you don't know how I admire you. It has been a long time to wait to see you, and there was so little I could do! If there is anything you will tell me, won't you?" She paused to run her fingers through Nomé's dark, rippling hair.

"You have been too kind—you have done too much already," the girl replied. "It is very strange to find myself here in your house. It was very good of you and Lord Felvex, but I am sure it was quite unnecessary. I hope I shall not trouble you long."

"You must not talk that way, Miss Destin," Lady Felvex implored. "Nothing we may do can begin to express the friendliness we feel. Besides, my husband has told me that you and he are old friends. It could not have turned out more fortunately for us, for I am so glad to see you, of whom I have heard so much. Let us forget what you have done, if you prefer it, and stay with us only as a most welcome visitor. We succeeded in finding your address, and I have already sent for your things. If there is anything else that you need I trust you will let me know. Aren't there any messages I can have sent for you—any friends that you would like to see?"

"Nothing, thank you," was the reply. "I know very few people in London, though if I think of anything I'll tell you; but I cannot accept your hospitality, Lady Felvex, any longer than is absolutely necessary. You have been exceedingly considerate of my feelings and I am not ungrateful, but it is very important for me to leave

as soon as possible. I have a great deal to do and little time in which to do it."

"I don't intend to embarrass you in any way," said Lady Felvex, rising. "You must feel at perfect liberty to do whatever you choose; but be sure of your welcome in any event. And I don't intend to tire you any longer. There are many of my friends who are most anxious to see you, Miss Destin—really, you have become quite famous. As soon as you are feeling stronger perhaps they may amuse you. But remember that you are to feel perfectly free while you are in my house."

She had scarcely left before a box of flowers was brought to the door of the room. The package was opened by the nurse, who placed a sheaf of red roses in her patient's hands. Nomé had a child's fondness for flowers, and pressed the wet, odorous blossoms to her lips and face with pleasure. Separating the stems she noticed a small sealed envelope attached to the ribbon which bound them, and opened it, with a mild curiosity to know the name of the donor. There was a card inclosed, on which was written in Mangus's fine, precise hand the words:

Remain and await orders.

This message came like a sudden blow, making her realize afresh the critical position in which she was placed. She nerved herself again, to be ready when her next opportunity came; for Mangus evidently still trusted her. Blotting out her sense of the hypocrisy of her position as the guest of Lady Felvex, eclipsing even the rising excitement at the thought of again meeting her lover, the inspiring feeling that she was to be a heroine of the Cause bathed her in new resolve. She pledged herself again to the Movement and all the bitter martyrdom with which it must try her.

V

Soon after the visit of Lady Felvex the minister himself had asked for

permission to see his guest. Nomé had been awaiting and dreading this meeting for days. The doctor had noticed her excitement when the call was mentioned, and though he could not interpret Nomé's perturbation, it was evident to his trained eye that something more than ordinary embarrassment affected her. The meeting was postponed, therefore, until he was surer of his patient.

But it could not long be delayed. Nomé's vigorous youth was rapidly demonstrating its power, the color had come into her cheeks and the freshness of her beauty was restored. The time soon came when in courtesy she could not refuse to see her host.

The situation, besides being false, was complicated by so many considerations that she had lost herself in the subtleties of it. Had he been merely a former acknowledged lover it would have been bad enough, but she had to remember all that his leaving her must mean. She must endure his pity for her as one who had fallen in love with him; one with whom he had been forced to break by means of an artifice of transparent chivalry. It took all the inspiration she could derive from the Cause, to enable her to forget the personal side of the coming event. Besides all this, there was a fluttering apprehension of alarm in her breast—a fear that these three years had not cooled her sufficiently for her to withstand the sway he had always had over her.

She was sitting in her reclining-chair when he entered, her black hair plaited and loosely drawn about her head, emphasizing her youthful appearance, despite the sadness that had come into her dark eyes. Out of the long, flowing sleeves of her gown, her little round arm emerged, and her slender hands plucked nervously at a bouquet of red roses in her lap. All else was lost in billows of cream-colored crêpe and cascades of old lace.

The color surged to her cheeks as she caught her first glance at him—and she blushed again to feel that guilty, revealing wave of emotion.

The uneasy slumber in her eyes had fled, and they leaped at him with almost an embrace in their eagerness. In that first glance she recognized all the old familiar charms, and noted as sharply every little change that three years had brought to his former distinction of form and bearing. A few new wrinkles about the eyes and a slight whitening of the hair about his temples had added much to the impression of strength and dignity he carried. What had been before but frankness and directness of manner was now tempered to power and resolve. But otherwise, he was the same keen, shrewd, liberal-minded man, still preserving much of his straightforward eagerness and freshness.

All this Nomé saw in one longing look; then her eyes fell. She made herself smile, and raised her glance to him again. There was so much she must not say to him that she dreaded to speak.

Lord Felvex said nothing until he had walked over to her chair and taken her hand; then, "Nomé, is it really you?" he almost whispered.

"No," she replied steadily, "not the Nomé you once knew, at least!"

"Who, then?" he asked, surprised at her tone. "Surely my friend—you have proved that most wonderfully!"

"I have proved nothing—yet," she answered. "It was an accident." She chose her words carefully, hoping that some time he would remember them, and understand.

"It was a most fortunate accident for me, then," he went on. "Nomé, of course I can't thank you for such an action as yours; it would be absurd, but I must say something. And I thank God that it was you who did it! But it's all so strange and unreal! I can't understand it. The coincidence was marvelous! To think that you, you, *you*, Nomé, happened to be at that particular place, at that particular moment, and alone—and armed, too!" He gave her this chance for explanation, without appearing to question her.

She perceived his unasked query, and could do nothing better than ignore it. So far as it was possible, in the tangled web that was woven about her, she would be honest with him. She could at least be silent, if that were possible; though, if the Cause demanded it, she must lie with all her might.

"It was a strange coincidence, wasn't it?" she said, with a smile that forbade his going on.

There were depths and shallows for her in any direction the conversation might turn, but most of all she feared to run aground on the discussion of their past acquaintance. Her pride forbade that, and she bent her wits to steer him away from any reference to it.

"You have been very good to me, Lord Felvex," she began. "It is I who should thank you for what you have done for me!"

He laughed outright. "By Jove, that is carrying politeness rather far, isn't it? If I had had the least idea you were in London, you would have been here visiting my wife long ago! Is your sister Alixe here?"

"No; she is still in New York."

"And your mother?" He looked puzzled.

"My mother also: I am here alone. I am studying—" She could, at the moment, think of no other subterfuge. But, with the natural frankness of her manner, the lameness of her explanation was patent, and Lord Felvex courteously forbore to inquire further.

"Well, at all events, now you are here, here you must stay. You had better make up your mind to that! Lady Felvex will be delighted. She knows we are old friends," he added tentatively. "I know what pleasure she will have in knowing you."

"Lady Felvex is charming! We shall most certainly be friends. She has already asked me to be her guest, but I am afraid it will not be possible—at least, not for long. I have much to do."

"You are not leaving London soon, I hope?"

"I can't say. But I must leave before long."

"To travel, I suppose?"

"Yes—to travel." She smiled as she thought what the phrase meant to her.

"Well, it's good to see you again, Nomé," he said, honestly trying for the point she seemed bound to evade. "Whether you are the same or not, I shall soon find out. There's such a lot I want to talk to you about."

Nomé winced, and made another attempt to deflect him. "Yes, we have much to talk over, haven't we? We shall have to get acquainted all over again, really. I have changed much more than I may show on the surface. There will be plenty of time to find all that out."

He did not see her warning. His frankness had been chafing under the strain her coolness put upon him, and now he broke through the ice.

"Nomé! we *must* be friends!" he exclaimed. "Surely we can be friends again, better friends than we ever were before. I have so much to explain—there were good reasons for what I did! I can't bear to have you here, at last, and not have you know why I acted so——"

She raised her hand to stop him. "You may be a good Minister of Police, Lord Felvex," she said calmly, "but you never had too much tact—so I beg of you to spare me. I know what you are going to say."

"You can't know!" he insisted. "I was in duty bound——"

"And now?" she inquired, raising her brows.

"It is different now. We can begin again, and I shall at least not act under false pretenses."

Nomé winced at the phrase. "You are dangerously near a forbidden topic, Lord Felvex," she said.

"I want to be honest with you, that's all. I know the result well enough. You are my guest, and you cannot leave, but isn't it better to be honest than to pretend?"

"Perhaps it is; I don't know. Sometimes we haven't the power of choice."

"I have found you again so wonderfully, Nomé! I could bear to have you think the worst of me while you were out of my world. There was nothing else to do. But now, when we meet face to face, here, now—it all comes back so swiftly and keenly—you are you, and I am I, and we must go together—"

Nomé flung herself out of her chair and faced him. She had done her best to stay him, but now it was too late to avoid the issue. "Must I go over it all again?" she cried, stretching out her arms to him. "Must you make me suffer again what I have suffered and conquered? My God! How I have fought you in spirit—how I have slain you in my breast—and here you appear as a ghost to haunt me! And I killed myself, at the same time with you—or thought I did. No, no, no, it is too late! You shall not harass me! See—I am quivering, but it is not for you! It is too late!"

"Is there another, Nomé?" he asked breathlessly.

"Yes—another—higher, nobler, greater love than you could ever inspire!"

"Then it is too late indeed!"

"Why did it have to be *you*? Why was I brought to this house? Why, of all places! Why do you torment me—you who should protect me, as your guest?"

"I am sorry," he answered. "But I could not think of you as changing, for I have not changed. I thought that we might at least be friends, and in all honor!"

"It is too late—I cannot!" Her face was one capable of expressing tragedy, and now it was drawn and intense with emotion. But it had not lost its dark, passionate beauty.

"Listen, Lord Felvex," she said, and her breath came fast with her excitement. "You have opened the door and let doubt into my soul. Now I am again on trial—how shall I prove myself? I have clung to that old love of you through two long years of pain, holding it to my breast as the one greatest thing of my life. All I sacri-

ficed for it had made it more dear to me. Then, my doubts of you at last killed it. Surely it died! Then came another, a greater emotion even than that. I could not have embraced it had not that old love died. But I did embrace it; it has grown, it has filled my life. It has given me peace, if not happiness. And now—comes doubt. If I believe you, must I return to that old love to prove myself true? Or must I hold to this other, to prove myself true? Whatever happens, shall I not prove myself incapable of any real, lasting emotion? So far, I have believed in myself. I was true to you until you died, and I have been true to this new feeling as well. Now I must be false to one or the other; which shall I choose? Oh, I want not to believe you—that would be the easier way! I cannot serve both, and I cannot abandon both. I will not believe you! You have taken advantage of your position, and of my position here. If I could only leave this house!"

"Nomé," he said, "what can I do? Let it be all over between us, if that will help you. I shall not speak of it again."

"Oh, it's too late now!" she moaned.

"Let us, at least, or at most, be friends, then."

"That can't be, mustn't be. I have no right even to your friendship."

"I don't see why not," he persisted.

"It is too dangerous."

She knew well enough how he would interpret this, but she was past caring now. She made a savage attempt to keep back her tears. Lord Felvex had walked away and stood by the window. There was a silence of some moments before he returned to her.

"I can't unsay what I said, Nomé," he began, "but I am sorry."

"Spare me your pity," she said bitterly.

"I am sorry for myself. You should be happy. It is ended now, forever. I have made the terrible mistake of being honest—the mistake men usually

make. But that should not hurt you permanently. You have something better than I could offer you. Take it freely. Don't be afraid to be happy. Don't be a slave to your past emotions."

"If I could only leave! I will leave as soon as possible!" she exclaimed.

"You cannot leave yet. Let Lady Felvex be your friend, instead of me."

"I am a hypocrite in her house. I can't bear that."

"You need no excuses. You saved my life. That is enough."

"Let me think. I had thought that I had finished with thinking, but I must begin again. So I thought I had finished with feeling, and I felt again. Never mind. Some time, Lord Felvex, you may know what I have suffered. Should that time come, you may forgive me."

He turned the talk to impersonal matters and, after awhile, her strain was relieved. Despite his honest blundering he had a delicacy of perception that reassured her; it was one of the old, familiar graces of manner that made her heart beat faster. When he left, she smiled a farewell.

The dull ache to which she had become accustomed, however, had now increased to an active pain. Had it not been for the Cause, she would willingly have cast off her pride and shown him how much she cared. She knew she was still capable of that, and would glory in it; but her life was not hers to live now. Not only must she know no hopes, but no despair.

Her one desire was that the word should come quickly, and that she might settle everything by one swift stroke. She would give it mechanically, and it would bring her peace.

That night she went down to dinner for the first time. As she passed through the hall on the arm of Lord Felvex a parlormaid passed her and opened the doors of the dining-room for them. There was something familiar in her movements which troubled Nomé for a moment. When she took her seat the maid had entered,

and stood at the butler's table. The next moment she turned and, in the cap and apron of the servant, Nomé recognized Irma Strieb. It was all she could do to conceal her surprise, and her mind ran immediately to account for the girl's presence. First, the terrible thought came to her that Irma had been sent to complete the work which she, Nomé, had failed in, and was there awaiting an immediate chance to kill the minister. Next, Nomé feared that she herself was distrusted and watched. That Irma had some definite mission was not to be doubted. Hard as it was to battle with these emotions, Nomé composed herself and awaited developments. She could scarcely trust herself to speak, and at first answered at random, overpoweringly conscious of Irma's presence. Her instinctive dislike of the girl was intensified by the espionage which she herself, as well as the minister, was under, making her feel more in league with him than with Irma.

The talk ran on, and Nomé took advantage of her illness to hazard but few remarks, watching the spy surreptitiously. Not a sign of recognition escaped Irma Strieb's eyes, however, and the drama played itself out.

Just before the dinner was over it occurred to Nomé, in a flash of intuition, that it was her duty to give Irma some chance of communication. Possibly she was, after all, only a messenger and had something important to communicate from Mangus. The suggestion relieved her mind enormously, and from that moment her wits rallied. At a chance when Irma was on her side of the table, Nomé caught her eye and dropped her serviette. Irma stooped to pick it up and, rising, found time to place a folded slip of paper in Nomé's hand. Nomé concealed it in the folds of her gown. Her spirits rose, for this byplay had reinstated her as one with a definite mission, a weapon of the Cause. She began to act again; all her finesse and art were brought out in a brilliant flow of conversation. She played her part as well for Irma Strieb

as for Lord and Lady Felvex, compelling, as usual, the admiration of her listeners.

As soon as she could be alone in her room she tore open the note. She had not allowed herself to speculate upon its contents before, for she had expended all her emotional energy upon the endeavor to seem self-possessed. But now her heart beat fast with a sudden fear lest the summons had come and she must strike immediately. She had been lulled into a sense of security—a feeling that, in spite of her inaction, she was still furthering the work of the Cause. Now she was brought up again suddenly with the prospect of an immediate call to arms, and she had an instinctive sense of relief when she read the following words:

Do not act until you have seen Madame Spiritan.

VI

NOMÉ improved rapidly in strength. When she was well enough to take the air she drove out in Lady Felvex's carriage. The two ladies were at times accompanied by Lord Felvex, and NOMÉ began to perceive, for the first time, evidences of the wide repute she had gained. Their landau was repeatedly stopped that the minister might receive the greetings of congratulatory friends; and everyone presented to NOMÉ had a look of piquant interest and an expression of approbation more or less flattering for the girl. She could not help noticing that the carriage was often pointed out by the strollers in the Park, and the curiosity displayed left her no doubt that she had become, in her way, a person of note. This public interest was as hard to bear as the private evidences of gratitude which her hostess showered upon her; for it brought into sharp relief the reverse of the medal—the picture of herself as an assassin pursued by the public opprobrium.

She was becoming accustomed and apathetic to her false position, however, biding the suspense, when one

day she was stung to the quick by the sight of O'Brien. He was sitting on a bench by the drive, and, as the carriage swept by, their eyes met. He stared at her without apparent recognition. A wave of color surged to NOMÉ's cheeks, for, on the instant, she realized what the sight of her, comfortably ensconced in the cushions of Lord Felvex's carriage, would mean to such an excitable member of the Circle.

It did not matter what the crowd thought of her. It did not so much matter even what Lord Felvex himself thought of her, for these outsiders would never understand her motives, and could never credit her with the glory of a sublime ideal. But to be misjudged and suspected by one of her own comrades in the Cause was galling to her pride. And she knew that O'Brien would suspect her. His fierce class-hatred and hot, radical prejudices would resent the sight of NOMÉ playing the part of an aristocrat. He would suspect her of being seduced by the life she was now leading; he would doubt of her being able to end it with the necessary tragic climax. She had been used before to wealth and social honors. He would scarcely trust her, surrounded by such temptations, not to return to her old place in the world, the place to which she was born. The vision of his face followed her, accusing and malevolent, during the rest of the day.

With the freedom of the house as her privilege, she had made familiar use of the library, which was well and wisely stocked. It was little used, and there NOMÉ often found sanctuary from the distracting moods of her suspense. There were two rooms completely filled with books, the smaller chamber being shut off from the larger by a curtained doorway.

She went downstairs one afternoon, intending to return a volume which she had borrowed, and was just about to pass between the portières when, pushing aside the folds, she saw that the small room was occupied. Lord Felvex was there with a lady whom NOMÉ

had never seen before, and the two were in the midst of an animated conversation.

Nomé took her in, estimated and appraised her at the first glance. She was a scintillating blonde with a high-rolling pompadour, eyes of Irish blue, deeply cleft cheeks and dazzling teeth set in a large open mouth. She was a finished product of fashionable society. All that was possible for coiffeur, masseuse and manicure, for tailor, milliner and jeweler, to do had been done. Every natural excellence had been so accentuated, and every defect so improved or concealed, that, without any pretensions to good looks, she gave an effect of definite beauty. Her costume was a miracle of violet chiffon; her hat was the extreme of picturesque millinery. She was smoking a cigarette whose perfume, mingled with the odor of violets, came to Nomé to accentuate the impression this exotic *mondaine* produced upon the young girl's mind. No strange and terrible orchid could have attracted her with stronger feelings of surprise and alarm. Nomé dropped the curtain hurriedly, yet stood fascinated by the scraps of talk which came to her.

"But you really *are* good-looking, George," the lady was saying. "Most Englishmen's faces are made of either wax or rubber, but yours is marble. You've got a lovely, firm chin, with that delicious little cleft that looks as if God had put His thumb there the last thing and said, '*There! now you're finished!*' And you've got psychic hands, too—that's why I'm so afraid of you! Look at mine—I wish I could whittle off my fingers till they were pointed like yours! Oh, you're a charmer, George, you needn't pretend not to be. But oh, George, I wish I could get that '*gelebt und geliebt*' look round the eyes! However did you do it? It must have taken two or three wonderful women to put *that* on, now!"

Lord Felvex's frank laughter rang through the little room. "It's no use, Belle," he said. "This won't work. What's the little game, anyway?"

"Shame!" she replied airily. "I

don't flatter myself. Oh, you're impregnable, I know that well enough. I'm not pursuing you. But I have the fatal art of understanding you, that's all. I can feel vibrations—I'm sensitive. You have power—I have only sympathy. And I'm emancipated enough to admire you frankly. I wish I could help you. You're so different to most men. Poor Henri was so much of a type that I felt as if I were marrying a thousand men at a whack when I got him."

"Do you know, Belle," Lord Felvex said, "sometimes I suspect you of being clever?"

"Oh, spare me!" she cried mockingly. "That only means that I'm not good to look at! I'd give a brain for a good pair of eyes, any time. Just because you have both, you shouldn't take advantage!"

Nomé waited to hear no more, and, her mind whirling with this revelation of Lord Felvex's character, she made her way to her room.

A week passed, bringing no further word from Mangus. Nomé caught occasional glimpses of Irma Strieb, and these convinced her that sinister preparations were being made, without giving any clue as to the new part that she herself was to play. She longed to have the suspense over and to know just what was expected of her.

One day Lady Felvex came to her room and made the first positive request.

"I hope," she said, "you will be willing to dine with us tonight, Miss Destin, for we are expecting several persons whom I would like to have you meet. The Russian military *attaché* will be here, and a Colonel Grennyngs—he was a field comrade of Lord Felvex during the war. Then there is a charming Irishwoman who is most anxious to meet you. She is Madame Spiritan; we all consider her very clever and amusing."

Nomé was alertly attentive in an instant. "I shall be charmed; do tell me about the lady," she said.

"Really, I have known her a very

short time, after all," said Lady Felvex. "She was sent to us with the best possible credentials by a friend of my husband in the French War Office. She is very attractive, and is a great favorite here—especially among the men. I might say, in fact, that she is essentially a man's woman."

"Her husband comes with her?" Nomé inquired.

"She is a widow," was the reply. "One can tell that as soon as she enters the room. She is rather good-looking and highly accomplished—most decidedly finished."

Something in Lady Felvex's tone made Nomé look at her curiously. The glance was caught and returned. Lady Felvex took the girl's hand.

"I hope you will not think me unfair," she said frankly, "but I must tell you that I don't like Madame Spiritan, myself. I distrust her instinctively, and yet I have no real reason for my feeling, and know nothing whatever to her discredit. It is partly on this account that I wish to be especially nice to her, and so I have asked you to help me. I don't wish to be prejudiced by my feelings in any way, and to avoid that I'm exerting myself to make her welcome in my house."

When Lady Felvex left Nomé gave herself over to speculation. She was to meet Madame Spiritan that evening, and would undoubtedly receive, at last, definite orders. There seemed to be no end to the complications of her position. A guest of Lady Felvex, wearing her hostess's own gowns, eating her bread and salt, she must hold herself ready to ally herself with, and to obey, one who was confessedly *persona non grata* in the household.

At seven o'clock she went down to the reception-room in some trepidation. Colonel Grennyngs had already arrived and was presented to her through a monocle. He was the typical Briton of the stage, complete even to the long drooping mustache and blond hair, a V.C. who would bridle and shy like a nervous colt if the subject of his decoration were brought up.

He greeted Nomé with a comical deference, paid exaggerated attention to everything she said, and, with exquisite tactlessness, broached the subject of her adventure with the footpads.

The Russian *attaché* entered just in time to save her from embarrassment. He was a smiling, dark, easy-mannered man, with a brown pointed beard, half bald, with twinkling eyes. His airs and graces cast a gloom over the inarticulate colonel who, routed by this competition, turned to Lady Felvex for appreciation.

The Russian was, in his turn, eclipsed by the arrival of Madame Spiritan, who, sailing in on a wave of laughter, filled the room with her vivacious presence. It was as if some whimsical songbird had fluttered indoors. Nomé's eyes sprang to meet the newcomer in excited anticipation. Then she stared as if in the presence of a ghost.

Madame Spiritan was no other than the woman she had seen in such questionable relations with Lord Felvex in the library only a few days previously. Nomé was astounded and indignant at the apparition—she had expected so different a messenger from Mangus. She had looked forward to the meeting, eager to welcome this new envoy of the Cause, a sister pledged, like her, to the noble perils of their crusade. Instead, she had to meet and greet a fashionable chatterbox, a society doll, not above the odium of a common, surreptitious flirtation. Nomé had little time to adjust herself, however, for Madame Spiritan was as voluble as ether, and her conversation, permeating the apartment, had the effect either of stupefying competition or of exhilarating repartee. She began to babble:

"Well, I am late, as usual; I don't know *what* is going to become of me—isn't it terrible? . . . How are you, my dear Lady Felvex? I haven't seen you in an age—when in the world was it?—and how d'y do, Colonel Grennyngs! I declare it is good to see you—and Count Pribdoff—how do you do?—I must have another game

of bezique with you—now, don't you forget!—and oh, I saw you flirting desperately with Hetty Clancy at the Dorés' cotillion—don't you *dare* to deny it!—I never thought of you as a conservatory man, but I'll have my revenge—you'll see! All's fair in love and Welsh rabbits. Lord Felvex, I *am* charmed—you don't look a day over ninety tonight! Think of finding two men in one room with crosses! Two V.C.'s ought to amount to royalty. It does seem like a waste of bravery and courage and gallantry under fire and conduct becoming an officer and a gentleman, and all that sort of thing, doesn't it? It's a pity we can't coax a lion into the room just to see what you two highly decorated men would do. I'll wager you'd pull up your trousers and jump on the table like ordinary women!"

Colonel Grennyngs burst into a roar of laughter and drawled: "By Jove, Madame Spiritan, it would jolly well take a regiment of elephants before you'd funk, I give you *my* word!"

"Now do present me to Miss Destin," Madame Spiritan went on airily. "I'm simply expiring to meet her. Oh, I'm so pleased! I've heard about you and thought about you, Miss Destin, until I was actually black in the face! Do tell me, what does it feel like to be a celebrity and have your picture in the papers and resolutions drawn up and streets named after you, and all sorts of nice things? I haven't been an infant prodigy since I had the mumps—but seriously, I do think you are awfully clever and brave and noble and everything, and I do admire your pluck so much! Really, I do, and I want to know you and tell you how foolish it was to save such an old reprobate as Lord Felvex, and find out where in America you have to go to get a complexion like that! I couldn't manufacture one as good if I had twenty-seven beauty doctors working on me for six weeks—and if you'll only exchange your hair for mine, I'll give you a dozen pairs of gloves to boot, and every one of them will make two for you. I'm simply dying to be a

brunette; blondes never do anything but get fat and marry or go on the stage—and yellow hair spells wall-flower in every ballroom in Europe. You mustn't mind me if I run on like this, my dear; I'm only getting my breath. I'm trying to prevent Count Pribdoff's monopolizing you. He always has the prettiest woman in the room in chains before the evening's out, and wherever he goes he leaves a streak of fire. . . . Why, Lady Felvex! are you really waiting for me? Do let's go in, then; I'm half starved—and when I'm hungry I always look like a fright. Give me your arm, count. This going in to dinner always reminds me of a wedding procession with the butler standing at the serving-table like a fat bishop, and the waiter giving away the potatoes, and the terrified guests mumbling 'with this fork I thee eat'!"

So, humming a snatch of "Lohengrin," she gallivanted gaily into the dining-room.

Nomé's mind was whirling with the effects of this gambado. Could it be possible that such a scatterbrain had anything to do with the Cause? She was shocked at the appearance of levity in such a connection, and could not imagine herself taking orders from such a madcap, addle-pated creature.

Yet the note from Mangus gave her no other choice than to await Madame Spiritan's instructions. Had Nomé possessed a larger sense of humor the occasion, tragic as were its possibilities, might have afforded her considerable secret mirth. As it was, she felt like a serpent depending for aid upon a butterfly. As she sat upon her host's right hand, she watched Madame Spiritan's frivolous machinations with Count Pribdoff, who appeared to be well within her sphere of influence. Lady Felvex engaged the attention of Colonel Grennyngs, leaving her husband to converse with Nomé. The talk ran on for awhile in these three channels.

The butterfly soon began to range further afield, and caught the attention of the two other men. She put

one elbow on the table and pointed a spoon at Colonel Grennyngs.

"Tell me, colonel," she said, "has the Victoria Cross ever been given to a woman?"

He turned to Nomé, and looking at her pointedly, said: "I don't see Miss Destin wearing any."

Nomé blushed, and Lord Felvex generously went to her assistance.

"There wouldn't be bronze enough in the world to make crosses of if we began to decorate the women who deserve them; and most women would have so many clasps that they couldn't carry them."

"Every factory girl in the land would be eligible," Nomé added.

"My dear Miss Destin," Madame Spiritan exclaimed, "I hardly think it will do for factory girls to be discussed, until the men are left alone with their coffee."

Nomé's cheeks were blazing again, and this time Lady Felvex interposed.

"The woman who can prevent men from finishing their coffee within three-quarters of an hour deserves a cross more than anyone, I think. I have no doubt that either Colonel Grennyngs or my husband would give theirs up to you, Madame Spiritan."

"Indeed, I shall not tempt them, thank you. They can have as long as they wish to smoke. I intend to have a tête-à-tête with Miss Destin after dinner and talk about New York. She must know loads of my friends there."

For the first time she shot a direct glance at Nomé, one with a semblance of hidden meaning behind it. Then she gushed on again:

"I was a factory girl once; that's why I'm so sensitive about them. I'd never dare to acknowledge it if I weren't Irish. Being an Irishwoman is almost as good as being an American girl—and that's the next best thing to coming from Mars direct."

The rest of the dinner conversation passed almost unheeded by Nomé. Her mind was whirling, fearful of what was to come afterward. Something, she knew, was to be revealed

as soon as she and Madame Spiritan could be alone. It was so different from what she had expected that it took all her energy to say to herself; "I am not really a guest here in this house, but a spy, an assassin ready at a moment's notice from this woman to shoot down my host in cold blood." Try as she might she could not adjust herself to this role; her ally's frivolous talk disconcerted her; she answered mechanically the questions that were put to her. Had she not possessed a natural fluency she would have betrayed her state of mind.

The lights of the candles, the reflections on silver and cut-glass danced before her eyes; she was as if in a dream, and in the dream she heard voluble phrases and well-turned sentences coming from her own lips, while she resurrected old ready-made opinions and criticisms of Bernard Shaw, Nietzsche and Grieg, the season's drama, the political situation in America, equal suffrage for women, British colonization, the rise of the Russian national spirit—on all of which topics she had thought well.

On her right Colonel Grennyngs, under the spell of her unconscious charm, plied her with persistent compliments; while, on the other side, she was distracted by the sight of Lord Felvex's handsome face. His deference and sympathy tortured her with memories of what he had been to her. From time to time sallies of laughter from the count, fascinated by the more flamboyant attractions of Madame Spiritan, greeted that lady's persiflage. Lady Felvex's quiet, gentle bearing was the only relief to Nomé's distracted mood. Here, she felt instinctively, she could find a friend, and would always find one, whatever happened. Lady Felvex's sure, intuitive sense of justice was bound to the girl's soul, for, whatever the issue, she was sure that here was one who would never judge her quickly or harshly.

The ladies at last withdrew, and passed into the drawing-room. Lady Felvex, hospitably mindful of Madame Spiritan's desire to talk with Nomé,

left the two alone and, making a simple pretext, went upstairs. Madame Spiritan continued her drolleries until the door was closed. Then her manner suddenly changed.

She took Nomé's arm and drew her to a seat upon the divan. From beneath the *berthe* of sequins that ornamented the breast of her own gown she hurriedly drew a velvet bag.

"Here," she said, "you must take this, first of all. Quick, now! It is a revolver. Be careful, it's loaded. I'll show you where to hide it." And turning up the fichu of lace about Nomé's neck she fastened the bag in place with pins, then draped the cascades over the spot and rearranged the corsage bouquet of roses so that everything was hidden.

"As soon as you are in your room," she said, "put it in some safe place, where you can get it at an instant's notice. There!" Her eye had flown from Nomé's breast to the door, back and forth, as she worked; but, when the weapon was well hidden, she fell back against the cushions. Nomé's troubled eyes followed her. Her lips were parted and her heart beat fast with the imminence of the peril betokened by these preparations.

"Must I do it tonight?" she whispered.

"I can't tell yet," was the answer. "I think not. Yet there is no telling how soon we may receive word from Berne. I may receive a telegram at any moment. You must hold yourself prepared to act at an instant's notice from Mangus or from me. It may be postponed for a month, or it may come in ten minutes. Listen; this will be your signal—'*It is only one of many.*' When you get that sentence, either in writing from Mangus or from my lips"—she had dropped her voice to a whisper—"you are to shoot Lord Felvex, and you are to shoot to kill. Do you understand?"

Nomé's head fell on her hand. "I understand," she murmured.

Scarcely had she spoken when the door opened and a maid entered bearing coffee, liqueurs and cigarettes.

Nomé saw at a glance that it was Irma Strieb, and looked to Madame Spiritan for her cue. To her surprise the lady's air instantly changed, and her torrent of nonsense broke loose again.

"Now, *really*, my dear Miss Destin, you ought to read some of the New Thought. You've no idea what a comfort it is to know that you don't have to do things and break your back and spoil your fingers trying to earn money and get on and be popular, and wheedle old men and flatter old women, but only just lie down on the sofa with a box of chocolates and take off your slippers and relax and devitalize and set your psychic forces in motion, and everything that's good and beautiful and splendid and lovely will come galloping toward you on horseback. You ought to place yourself in a mood to induce receptivity and trust in the All-Good, and just let the vibrations bring about the phenomena. It's perfectly lovely, and saves all your worry and brain fag and nerve force and money and everything. I tell you, people don't half realize what a wonderful help can be gained through not worrying about things and just eating your dinner peaceably and letting the universal what-you-may-call-it radiate through you. Why, when I think of all the martyrs that have burned at the stake, and had their teeth pulled out and their toes cut off—ugh! isn't it horrid?—just because they didn't know enough to enter into the harmony and oneness of things and rely upon the objectivity of thought and spiritual influence, it does seem a shame, doesn't it? But I'm sure we are growing to a higher and a nobler conception of existence and life forces and truth and things. Lady Felvex says that the New Thought is nothing but a cheap, sloppy optimism, and why don't we go to Emerson or Plato and get it in solid junks without capitals and italics and milk and water. But I must say these little magazines and blue-covered books with funny title-pages do chew it up for you so fine and thin that a mere child ought to be able to put transcendental forces in

motion and bring about introactive relations with the All-in-All, and it has done me loads of good. I'm happy and contented and at peace with the great principles of life, and I don't worry about the Submerged Tenth, or tuberculosis, or anything like that, and I think that's a great gain, don't you?"

As she warbled on, she helped herself daintily to the coffee, poured a glass of *bénédictine* and took a cigarette. Irma Strieb was stolidly oblivious of all save her duties, and as soon as the two ladies had been served, left the room without a word or look of recognition.

"Don't you know who she is?" Nomé whispered in perplexity.

"I know her, but she doesn't know me, by any means. You and Mangus are the only persons in England who know my secret, and you would never have been told if it hadn't been for the extraordinary complications of the situation."

She dropped her voice to a lower pitch: "My dear, Mangus has asked me to do what I can to induce you to transfer your services to the International Committee. We need information that can be obtained only by women who are willing to live as I do. There's no use mincing matters—I'm a spy. I report directly to Berne, but I act in co-operation with Mangus at the head of the English section. You could help us enormously with your charm and your education and the immense advantage you have acquired in having saved Lord Pelvex. We need women like you, and if you are willing to join that branch of the work there is much for you to do, though there is little enough glory in it. This assassination, as the English section planned it, is a mere detail, and we can easily find someone else to carry it out. The whole situation has developed so startlingly in the last month that we are sitting tight, awaiting advices from Switzerland. You are given the choice, however, of joining the secret service with me, or of carrying out your original errand. But you must choose immediately between the two. Your

action, whatever it is, must be voluntary."

Nomé answered firmly: "Madame Spiritan, it is too late now to recede or to change. I have no choice but to go on as I began. I would always be suspected by the Circle of treachery if I kept the place I seem to hold now. Besides all this, there are other reasons that impel me to keep to my original intention. The whole success or failure of my life depends upon it. I've had enough of theories and abstractions and equivocal positions; I must *act* for once, and put my convictions to the test. I don't care to live, but I do want to end my life with some one big thing having been accomplished. The suspense and the hypocrisy of the situation are unbearable, and I can scarcely wait to end it all."

"You are a brave girl," said Madame Spiritan; "you are magnificent! I confess I couldn't do it. I can pull the wool over the eyes of these fools, hoodwink men, deceive women, eavesdrop and play the spy—that is my *métier*. But I could no more pull the trigger of that revolver than I could come into this drawing-room in a last year's frock. It is settled, then. I'm sorry for you, my dear girl, but you to your work and I to mine; we are both laboring for the Cause."

Nomé looked up at her in frank admiration. "Oh, I had no idea you were like this!" she whispered. "How I misjudged you! How little I know of life, of human nature—almost as little, Madame Spiritan, as I know of myself. How much I long to know!—and how little, little time I have in which to learn!"

Madame Spiritan took both Nomé's hands in hers, and the tears were in her eyes. "You are very young, dear," she answered. "Indeed, you have much to learn. I am a woman—do you think I enjoy my hypocrisy? Do you think I can go about, two-faced, double-tongued, laughed at or despised as a scatterbrain, a doll, a flirt, without feeling my degradation? And I know, too, how much worse than that I am! The lowest sneak-thief is better, if I

allow myself to think by the world's standards. But, Nomé, we have given up the world's standards for something higher. We have pledged to this Cause not only our lives but our honor. I gave mine willingly, cheerfully, and so must you give yours."

"Oh, how you have helped me!" Nomé exclaimed in her relief at finding, at last, a worthy comrade to support her in this agony of her spirit. She smiled through her tears. "I think I can bear it now," she said simply. "And yet—there is one thing, Madame Spiritan, that you do not know—that you could never guess—you have no idea of my weakness—I could not confess it to a man—but—Lord Felvex—"

Madame Spiritan bent over and kissed her upon the cheek. "I know," she said. "It was partly for that that I offered you the chance to act with me."

"No! no!" Nomé cried bitterly. "Never that! I must die. I long for death!"

"We shall make all possible preparation for your escape the moment we receive advices," Madame Spiritan continued hurriedly. "But I must warn you that there is little hope of our being able to get you off; less chance than there was before. In plain terms, it is murder—and really, my dear Miss Destin, I think your tall buildings in New York are the most atrocious things! That Flatiron building is, for all the world, like a huge slice of cheese, filled with maggots; and as for your Elevated trains, one might as well climb into the inside of an anaconda and be done with it!"

Her quick ear had detected the rustling of Lady Felvex's silk skirts outside the door, and before it swung open Madame Spiritan's bubbling pleasantries were filling the room. Nomé, despite her agitation, could not fail to admire the marvelous agility of her fellow-conspirator's wits. She herself found some trouble in managing the change of mood, and, to conceal her nervousness, rose to greet her hostess.

"Madame Spiritan has been most amusing," she said, "but we have missed you, Lady Felvex."

Almost immediately the drawing-room doors were thrown open and the men entered. The conversation became general, and Nomé, stimulated by the excitement, began to talk. She soon held the circle of guests in delight with her conversation. Colonel Grennyngs's eyes did not leave her. The count forgot, for the while, the giddier attractions of Madame Spiritan. The minister drew the girl out with skilful questions. Lady Felvex watched her curiously, much interested in the effect she was producing upon the men.

The color was sustained in Nomé's cheeks. Her eyes were dark with emotion, her gestures were animated by the insistence of her soul to prepare a defense for herself against the time of accusation. She turned the talk toward the higher ethical subjects and the martyrs of all great causes, defending even those who, half crazed by brooding over great wrongs, had made their tremendous but sublime mistakes with the high-mindedness of patriots. Madame Spiritan, as Nomé approached these radical theories, mingled a running stream of whimsical comment; but the interest of the men was held, despite their objections, in admiration of the girl's eloquence, and Nomé's object was attained. Whatever should happen now, she could never be accused of a common, vulgar treachery. She had said enough to make them pause in their judgment of her when her hour had struck. It was characteristic of her vanity that she should take the pains thus to pave the way for her apologists. She could not bear to be anything less than wonderful, anything less than a heroine.

The talk finally ebbed until a game of bridge was proposed. Madame Spiritan eagerly accepted the opportunity to break up the gravity of the evening. A party was arranged, consisting of herself and the three men, Lady Felvex protesting her desire to look on with Nomé, who could not play.

It was now Madame Spiritan's turn to entertain the company, and, in spite of the etiquette of the game, she kept up a continual fire of raillery. Lady Felvex took her place upon the divan, holding Nomé's hand.

The play had gone on for half an hour when the door opened and Irma Strieb entered, bearing an envelope upon a tray.

"A telegram for Madame Spiritan," she announced, and handed it to that lady.

Nomé freed herself from Lady Felvex's hand. Her own flew to her breast. There it rested, trembling, upon the weapon hidden under the fichu while her eyes stared fixedly at the group seated about the table, awaiting the signal that might come.

"Why in the world do you suppose they pursue me with telegrams so?" Madame Spiritan complained pettishly, tearing open the envelope. "Now I shall forget the run of the game, and you'll have to suffer for it, Count Pribdoff. There's only one possible excuse for a telegram, and that's the death of a rich uncle in New Zealand. Everything else ought to wait until after breakfast and be sterilized before it's brought to the table. Now, what do you think of that? Fancy! this is from my milliner. I get them all the time, and they always say the same thing: 'No answer received from bill sent last week.' Colonel, it's your lead, I believe. Is it diamonds or spades?" She tore the paper into scraps and tucked it carefully into the front of her gown, then took up her cards.

Nomé's hand fell to her side, and she leaned back against the cushions with an unconscious sigh.

VII

WITH this respite, Nomé had time to fall into her old doubts again. Although Madame Spiritan's character and purpose were now clear to her, Nomé's suspicions of Lord Felvex's weakness and flippancy were hideous. His compla-

cent attitude during the little tête-à-tête she had surprised was not to be forgotten nor explained. He had been chivalrous enough to forbear to insist upon his old love—was he then consoling himself with the cheap delights of a new? It seemed so inconsistent with his character that Nomé would have scorned to believe it, were it not that, believing, it made her work, upon the whole, easier. If she could only believe it thoroughly, she would be glad of a wound to her pride that would be so relieving a counter-irritant, a narcotic to her own personal love.

But she could not believe it. Her lover himself destroyed her doubt, while, at the same time, digging still deeper the pitfall of deceit into which she must fall.

His first careful avoidance of her society had become more and more impossible. While she was in immediate expectation of the word to act, she had kept aloof, but the continuance of her stay had brought them necessarily together so often that the two had fallen naturally into a semblance of their old familiarity. Their talk ranged wide, for their sympathy on all matters excepting social science was complete.

They could not long, however, evade the one subject which colored their whole association. As she fell again under the spell of his frankness and breadth of view, she felt more and more desirous of impressing him with her own steadfastness of purpose, and the emotional intensity which had always succeeded with others. Most of all she desired to justify herself, before it was too late.

Lord Felvex gave her this opportunity one morning after breakfast. He had come upon her, unexpectedly, in the library, much as she had come upon him, and there was something in the surprise of the meeting that brought them suddenly closer together than they had been before. It was, in fact, the first time that he had seen her alone since his visit to her.

She let her book fall, and looked up at him with an attempt at calmness,

but her confusion was apparent. He stopped at sight of her, then put down his hat and gloves, and stood for an instant leaning against the open shelves of books. She had begun to tremble before he spoke.

"Nomé," he said, "I can't stand this; what prevents our being friends?"

Her eyes fell. "Oh, it's no use," she murmured.

"What prevents our being friends?" he repeated. "Have I some enemy to whom you are pledged?"

"No, no enemy—at least, none that need matter."

"Have I changed so much that you cannot care for me?"

"Oh, no! Surely not that!"

"Have you?"

"No, not in that way."

"Then we are friends—really."

"Yes, that's what tortures me. I can't explain. Don't ask me to. You have friends enough. Console yourself with them."

"What do you mean?"

"Surely you have friends enough."

"Whom?" He knitted his brows, and then, dropping into a chair beside her, he looked at her steadily. "Do you mean anyone in particular, Nomé?"

"No." But she avoided his glance.

"Is it possible—that you mean—Madame Spiritan, for instance?"

The color rushed to her face as she replied, returning his gaze boldly enough now: "I have perceived your predilection."

"And that, then, is what prevents our friendship?"

"Oh, no!"

"Good God!" he exclaimed, "is it possible that you can imagine there is anything between Madame Spiritan and me?"

"I am sure that there is not. But I am not sure that it is your fault. It does not matter, anyway. You know me well enough to believe me incapable of any such vulgar jealousy."

"Nomé, let me say this: you know the responsibility of my position, in a way, but perhaps you do not know that my office compels me oftentimes

to keep up acquaintances which, personally, I should prefer to be free from. Surely you will be reasonable enough to distinguish between the man and the office."

"Oh, I do! I do! It is because of your official capacity, precisely, that we cannot be friends."

"And for no other reason?"

She let her head fall upon her hand to hide her shamed face from him. Then she said slowly: "Yes, and for another reason. Why will you wring it from me? Don't you know? Can't you see? I have loved you, and I can't forget it! I can't even keep it decently to myself. This first time we are alone it shrieks aloud!"

"But I don't understand—you said that there was another."

"There is, or there was. But I can't forget you! I have no pride, no honor, no constancy left. To think of you for an instant proves me unfaithful and unworthy of the other, but to cling to the other must prove that my first, fresh, dewy morning of love was false and has died. I can't bear it. No matter which way I turn I am false and untrue! I have prided myself on my steadfastness of purpose, my strength of feeling, my abandon, my wholeness of emotion, and now I am weaker than the merest dabbler in sensations."

Lord Felvex took her hand in both his. "Don't say that, Nomé," he pleaded. "Don't make me forget, too! Oh, if only my own happiness and yours were at stake, I would show you the cheapness of that pride of yours! I would show you which way to turn for happiness! I would conquer you and save you and preserve you."

"And if I were only concerned with my happiness," she replied, looking at him through her tears, "I would take you! Oh, I can speak the truth at times! I would cast everything aside, and hold to you, whether you would have me or not. I would stake all on that first awakening into life, and believe it the best and truest. But I cannot, George, I cannot! Nor, if I could, would there ever again be peace in my

heart! 'Mein' Ruh ist hin!' I must leave you."

"Yes," he assented. "It is the only way."

"I will leave as soon as possible. But we must spare Lady Felvex—I will not be abrupt."

"On the contrary," he replied, "Lady Felvex must know everything!"

"Can you tell her?"

"She is my best friend. You do not know her!"

Nomé leaned to him impulsively, and kissed him, then sprang up. "I had forgotten how fine you were!" she said.

"I had forgotten nothing about you," he said, smiling.

"And perhaps, now, we can be friends. I am not afraid any more. Perhaps sometime you will understand. I thought I was strong enough to bear it, but I broke down. Yet, somehow, I feel the stronger for it."

It was not till the exhilaration of his presence had left her, and she had gone to her room, that she began to awaken to her responsibility, and the hideous mistake she had made in permitting this crisis to arrive. She had again fallen a prey to her emotions and her vanity. She had been lured on again by the desire to right herself in his eyes, and had come near to ruining the projects of the Cause by precipitating a rupture with the household. How could she explain this to Mangus, who depended upon her maintaining friendly relations with Lord Felvex? There was only one chance for her—that her orders should come before she had to leave the house. She had had her scene, and now she must risk the consequences.

It was with a tortured mind that she repented her indulgence. As before, she had thought, felt and spoken; even in this scene she had not acted. But, as before, she made a brave attempt to cajole her conscience with promises. When the time came—then she would prove herself!

From the day when her duty was postponed Nomé had kept a journal,

and every day she had written pages of confidential confession, intending that it should vindicate her to the world after her act was consummated. She spent much energy upon this task, often writing far into the night. It was expressed in as guarded terms as she could invent; nevertheless, her conscience reproved her for the indiscretion, for the book, if discovered before her deed was enacted, might have destroyed the plans of the Movement. She could not deny herself the satisfaction of writing, however, and condoned the offense with feminine casuistry. She was engaged upon this business one day when, after a knock upon the door, Irma Strieb entered.

Nomé looked up in surprise, for up to this time the two women had never been alone. Now Irma's face expressed fellowship for the first time.

"Ospovat is downstairs and wishes to see you," she said.

"Ospovat?" Nomé repeated. "Here?"

"Yes," Irma replied. She came nearer, with the excuse of arranging the flowers upon the table. "I don't like it," she whispered. "He should stay away. Mangus would be furious if he knew, but Ospovat always was a little fool—especially over you."

"I must see him," said Nomé.

"Of course, I knew you would," Irma retorted.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that you have lost your heart—that you are weakening—and I expected it!"

Nomé rose and pointed toward the door. "You must go!" she said. "I don't dare to argue with you here—it is too dangerous—but you are mistaken, or you're false. You know well enough that I'm obeying orders as much as you, and that I must wait."

"I know well enough that you are always the fine lady, and I do the dirty work! And I know more, that you like it as much as I dislike it. And I suspect still more, too. I am glad of one thing, though, that I am here to watch you. I've seen and heard al-

most enough already." Irma's face was sullen as she turned to go.

"For heaven's sake, be careful how you talk!" Nomé entreated. "It won't do for you to be seen here with me, and least of all with any such evidence of a quarrel. You must believe in me, Irma. I am suffering too much already from my position to have to bear the taunts of my own comrades."

"Am I your comrade, or is Lord Felvex—the man you were chosen to kill?" Irma demanded.

Scarcely had she said the words when there was a knock at the door. Irma opened it. Lady Felvex entered, but upon seeing the two women, each with heightened color, she hesitated at the threshold. "I beg your pardon," she began.

"Irma came up to announce a caller," Nomé explained.

"Irma has no business here," said Lady Felvex. Then, turning to the girl, she added: "Where is Woodley? Why didn't he bring up Miss Destin's caller's card?"

"Woodley was busy—at least, I told him I was coming upstairs, and offered to announce Miss Destin's friend. You see, Woodley wouldn't let the gentleman in at first."

"This is most extraordinary!" said Lady Felvex. "I can't imagine, Miss Destin, why my footman has taken it upon himself to comment upon your callers, nor why he shouldn't have come up to you. I shall most certainly look into the matter."

"Woodley was busy, my lady," Irma repeated, and in speaking betrayed enough emotion for Lady Felvex to give her a swift look.

"Irma has not been annoying you in any way, Nomé?" she hazarded.

"Oh, by no means!" Nomé hastened to protest. Irma's face had grown dark.

"If I thought it were possible, I should discharge her immediately," Lady Felvex remarked. Then, turning to the maid, she said seriously: "Irma, you must not forget that Miss Destin is the most honored guest I could possibly entertain. You have

no right in this room, and it is perfectly evident to me that your coming here is the result of some pretext. Your face shows that something has been said that should not have been said, though Miss Destin is too kind to admit it."

"My dear Lady Felvex, believe me, Irma has said nothing discourteous or unnecessary. I beg you to say no more about it."

Lady Felvex left the room with Irma, and Nomé trembled to think of the difficulties that might ensue from this contretemps. Irma's brooding, lowering looks betokened trouble. It was unfortunate that Lady Felvex had so keenly read the situation.

She went down to see Ospovat, ill at ease, but anticipating his sympathy and trust. She was almost ashamed to think how much she needed his blind confidence, how his words would cheer and cool her.

He was awaiting her, embarrassed and awkward, in the luxuriance of the Felvex reception-room. Other guests had always filled it, and it had framed them with a harmonious background, but the little Russian Jew seemed lost in its elegance, more pathetically ridiculous than ever. He sat on the edge of a gilded chair, twirling his hat in his hands, gnawing his lip, eagerly watching the door.

His joy at seeing her was touching. His tears fell upon her hand like rain as he saluted her. He was no less frightened than embarrassed, also, in the evident fear that his visit might compromise her. As soon as he could control himself so as to talk freely, his intense emotion broke forth in hurried words.

"Ah, how good it is to see you again, Nomé, and to look into your soul through your beautiful eyes! If only the others could see you! I have counted the days—I have watched for you in the Park—I have read the papers that told how you were getting well! I love you more than ever, Nomé, dear Nomé—don't ask me not to tell you so, for I must! How I have suffered with you—if I could only

suffer for you! But that, too, shall be, some time!"

"You believe in me, after all?" Nomé said, hanging upon his words.

"Ah, yes; how can I not trust you, my wonderful Nomé! I trust you always, in spite of anything they may say, and I defend you always!"

"They doubt me, then, at the Circle?" Nomé ventured, sick at heart.

"You must not blame them—they are all wild and mad! I do not know what is the matter with them; but those articles in the papers have stirred them up. They have seen you riding out with the minister and his wife. I know you could not help it, but it has made much trouble. I have defended you always. I told them that you fired at the minister and hit the robber by mistake—I don't care if you did or not—what you did was right, but I could not bear to hear you so spoken of, you who are so wonderful a heroine, who are worth more than all the Circle put together!"

"What do they say?" Nomé demanded.

"Do not make me tell you," Ospovat pleaded, the tears coming into his eyes.

"You must tell me," Nomé insisted. "Tell me all!"

Ospovat's face grew white, and he almost whimpered. "They say you are a traitor—they say you have forgotten all about the Cause, now, with your rich friends—but I know it is not true, Nomé! Tell me it is not true!"

"Of course it is not true," said Nomé coldly, "but go on—tell me everything!"

"They say that you were once an aristocrat—only because you had a little money at home—and that you will end by being an aristocrat—and will leave us poor men and women to make the fight alone."

"This is O'Brien, of course!"

"Yes, O'Brien curses you day by day. You know how he is."

"Yes, I know. Once he was so fond of me he could not say enough. He said too much for me to believe. It is like him to go to the other extreme. I might have known it."

"But he can't see the big side of it—it is only that, Nomé. Don't hate him, please! Even I don't hate him. I'm sorry, that's all—he'll know better some time. He wants the minister killed only because the minister killed Kinston and Moreley and Spayrock. O'Brien can't forget that—he wants revenge."

"Are there many with him?"

"Yes, many—too many—of the Circle. They are all wrought up. It was the papers and the driving in the Park that did it, and it has stirred them up so that Mangus has hard work to hold them."

"No one believes in me, then?"

"Ah, I believe in you, Nomé, and some of the others, but the women are all jealous. But you will show them! You will do it, and I shall help you! You surely will make another trial, Nomé?"

"I shall do what I can. You know I must wait and be silent. But this terrible suspense must end." Nomé hesitated before she put the next question.

"What does Mangus say?"

"He says nothing but that we must wait—always wait! I can't understand it. Why can't it be done immediately? Do you know?"

"I know something of it, but I can't tell you. This thing is bigger than we thought, and we must obey orders."

"I know. I came to help you. Nomé, if you should lack the courage, if your woman's body should weaken, though your woman's soul never could—won't you let me help you?"

"Ah, you do doubt me, then? I was sure of it."

"No, no, no! Only—O'Brien was for another casting of the lots—I volunteered myself, but Mangus would not have it. There's only one thing I'm afraid of—perhaps Lord Felvex has become too much your friend. Is he your friend?"

"Yes; I have learned to admire him more and more."

"Then how much greater the deed will be! Think of it, Nomé—think what a chance you have! Who will

not stop to listen to us when you, who have saved his life, who have made him your friend, can sacrifice him to the Cause! Never has anyone had such a chance to publish the Cause. They will *have* to hear us then."

Nomé could scarcely speak. She felt for Ospovat's hand in sympathy. "Ospovat! you remember our talk, that night before I went out to act?"

"Yes."

"You remember that I told you that I had loved—someone?"

"Yes." He sat staring at her with his lips apart; then he sprang to his feet. "Oh, Nomé, Nomé! Do you mean that Lord Felvex is that man—that you love him?"

"Yes—I love him."

He fell on his knees and kissed her hand. "Oh, my poor Nomé! How glorious a chance, how terrible a chance you have!"

She looked at him wide-eyed.

"How glorious!" he repeated, and looked up at her with the rapt face of the enthusiast. "You love him! My God, it will be wonderful! Never, never has one had such an opportunity. We shall win ten years in advancing the propaganda!"

Even Nomé, accustomed to such lofty ideals of renunciation, wondered at Ospovat's simplicity and direct vision. There was not the slightest doubt in his mind that she could fail, that she would do else than welcome this blessing of her mission, giving all for the Cause. She almost resented the slight consideration he gave to her personal feelings. It annoyed her to have him so sure of her—to seem to make so little of her trial.

"Ospovat," she said, "if it were I who should be killed, and you who were the one to kill me, would you do it?"

"Why, of course!" he said, and his voice expressed surprise at the question. "It would be beautiful, Nomé! Don't men often kill the women they love? What other women do they ever kill? But you would not die alone, of course. I would kill myself immediately. Then it would be all right."

There was the noise as of a door

quickly shut at the other end of the room. Nomé and Ospovat came to themselves in an instant, for the scene had carried them into another world. Nomé went to the hall door and looked out. By the dining-room she saw Irma with Lady Felvex, both evidently angered. What had happened? She and Ospovat had talked without caution, and both doors had been open.

She dismissed the Jew immediately with a hurried farewell and then walked, her heart beating, to the dining-room.

"I am very sorry to say that I have just discharged Irma," said Lady Felvex. "I came downstairs to find her at the reception-room door, and I am much afraid she was eavesdropping." She took Nomé's cold hand in hers. "You do not know how badly I feel about this, especially after what probably happened in your own room. I do not know, of course, how long Irma had been listening, but I trust that she heard nothing important. I am so distressed about this having happened that I don't know what to do, but it cannot be helped now, and we must hope that nothing will come of it. We are safe for the future, at all events. To think that such a thing could happen in my house, to my guest! You will try to forgive it, dear?"

VIII

NOMÉ passed a sleepless night, the victim of foreboding. She had long been aware of Irma's envy, although it had been masked when the two met in the Circle. The only evidences of any strained relation had been those subtle pin-pricks of women's warfare, which are so slight as to pass unnoticed before men's eyes.

But a submerged feud had been going on for months. Nomé heretofore had been too proud to notice Irma's innuendoes, and had treated them with contempt. She could well afford to ignore them, feeling herself intellectually, as well as physically,

the superior. But now the breach was opened, and she felt that danger was imminent. She prepared herself to act upon the defensive.

A day passed, and nothing warned her of Irma's malignity. But the next morning word came from Mangus in the early post. It was a message in a cipher, adopted by the Circle since the renewed activity of the Movement, and its final commitment to its hazardous line of aggressive action.

The envelope, which bore a type-written address, contained a sheet of white paper upon which was pasted three scraps of newspaper. The first contained the words "THE TIMES," which was Mangus's own code-word. The second clipping bore the printed word "Personal" which signified a desired meeting, and the third was merely a date line showing that the interview was asked for the ensuing afternoon.

Although Nomé had for some time been able to go out alone, she had dared hold no communication with members of the Circle, and her walks, therefore, had been so lonely and aimless that she had taken scant advantage of her freedom. Ospovat's call had been surreptitious, and would probably never have been discovered had not Irma happened to overhear the footman's comments on Miss Destin's caller. The violation of the rule which had been imposed by Mangus was, of course, Ospovat's fault, but Nomé stood ready to bear the brunt of any possible rebuke for disobedience. Despite the prospect of Mangus's harshness, she felt now that she must see him and bring this long suspense to an end. What would be possible after he became aware of her indiscretion in making it impossible for herself to stay longer in the Felvex household, she did not much care. If necessary, she would take the law into her own hands, for her own soul's salvation.

So that afternoon she left word for Lady Felvex that she was to be away for a few hours, but would return in time for dinner. Leaving the house

alone, she walked to Piccadilly Circus and took a penny 'bus to Chelsea.

Mangus lived in one of a row of brick houses of the Restoration period on the Queen's Road, opposite the Royal Hospital. It stood a little back from the street, a high, wrought-iron fence shutting off a grass plat containing two plane trees. His rooms were on the top floor, whose three small dormer windows gave upon the inclosure of the Pensioners' Home. One casement was open, and, as she came to the gate, she caught sight of his head with its red fez as he sat smoking his pipe, watching for her appearance. He saw her before she had time to knock, and came down himself to let her in. She followed him up the stair through the old painted, paneled hall.

The room was low studded, its ceiling broken into sloping planes and its walls cut into strange corners and recesses; the whole covered with an old-fashioned figured paper, bulging like huge blisters where the dampness had loosened its paste. Two kitchen tables, a bookcase and a few worn easy-chairs all strewn with books, papers and pamphlets sufficed for furniture. For decoration, caricatures from French and German papers were pinned to the walls. The remains of a sixpenny lunch lay upon a tray on the narrow mantel over the fireplace, and the worn, soiled linoleum on the floor was littered with sundry articles from Mangus's somewhat reproachable wardrobe. An inner room showed through a low door, dark and gloomy, and beyond, a window, outside which the shadowy branches of an oak tree waved listlessly.

For awhile Mangus said nothing, pacing the room, sucking at his pipe, and casting an occasional lowering glance at the girl who sat disconsolately enough beside the hearth. Then he shot a question as deliberately as one might let fly an arrow.

"So you are in love with Lord Felvex, eh?"

It was sudden, but to Nomé it was neither kind nor unkind, coming from her grizzled chief. Its brusque

directness was but an evidence of his character. She knew how the paramount issue of the Cause had blotted out his sense of the lesser delicacies of personal consideration. This sort of brutality Nomé had always at once resented and admired, and now, as before, she was brought under the compelling spell of his irresistible will. The suspense and mental distress of the last month, besides, had cooled her fire somewhat, and there was a furtive sense of guilt upon her.

"I am," she said quietly. "Why?"

Mangus stopped and stared at her, sucking at his pipe. Then he shrugged his round shoulders.

"You have made good use of your time!" he sneered. "Upon my word, I thought you were going to deny it! I swear I hoped you were worth something more than this. Good God—to dabble in pink-and-white schoolgirl romance at such a time! It's incredible. What do you mean, girl? Have you lost your wits because you got your name in the papers? Why, if you had waded not more than one toe deep into the Movement I don't see how you could have stultified yourself so! And I almost believed in you; I fancied that emotion could take the place of intellect, by God! Put that feather in your cap, along with your other conquests—that you hoodwinked Luke Mangus! If you never do anything else, you can brag of that to Saint Peter. Talk about women's hearts! How long did it take you to go mad, then? How long did this frock-coated Lothario take to seduce you from honor and reason and faith? How long ago, Nomé, did you find out that you had become the latest toy of the Spirit of the Race?"

"About four years," she answered steadily.

His hands, which had been clasped behind his back, flew forward and he seized her hand. "Do you mean that Lord Felvex is the man you told me about—the man you loved before?"

"Of course! How else could this have happened?"

His whole manner had changed on

the instant, and as much as there was in him of gentleness came to the surface in a wave of tenderness that surprised her. "Oh, Nomé, I beg your pardon," he said. "Strange! I didn't think of that. I thought of everything but that—everything but the unexpected which I should have known would happen—the 'long arm of coincidence' we are forced to feel so miraculously often! Strange I couldn't understand!"

She shook herself free now, with rising anger. "Could you think so lightly of me that you could believe me capable of so cheap a piece of egoism? It was an affront to me—you should have known me better! What have I done—how have I treated the Cause that you could have thought of me as so futile, so unsteady a soul? Oh, I have been weak, I know, but I have not been so weak as that!"

"Indeed, I did not believe it, quite, Nomé. Until you admitted it, I believed it but the gossip of an envious woman. Now I understand—let it pass—we have no time for quarrels, you and I. The point is, you are in love again, and that puts a new face on the whole matter. I'm sorry for you, girl. It is hard; but if you have given so much for the Cause, you must give more. Only, someone else must do the work." He eyed her keenly under his heavy brows.

"Someone else?" she repeated.

"Certainly!" Mangus replied.

"Surely you cannot do it now!"

She took his right hand in both hers and grasped it hard.

"Ah, you'll not go back on me, Mangus, will you? You've not lost faith in me because I failed the first time? What can the Cause ask that I will not give—and do!"

He watched her as a physician watches a patient through a crisis, smiling at her burst of enthusiasm. "What can it ask of you, Nomé? An ounce of lead, and a steady eye behind it—an eye without tears, and a finger that will not tremble! And that you will never have to give, I fear. And yet—if you *could* do it!"

"I shall!"

"If you could do it, no one else would do so well!"

"I can!"

"If you could do it," he said again, "the affair would have an *éclat* that would be worth more to us than twenty assassinations. You are already well known in London—we may say you are famous. By rescuing the minister you have a news value to the papers. Everything that can be found out about you will be printed. And you yourself, if you sacrifice the last shred of your privacy, can intensify the sensation a thousand-fold. No one is better qualified for such a work. You might even write something that would be printed after the affair—if it were not suppressed, it would be read by three million men the next day!"

"I have written something," Nomé admitted timidly. "I have been keeping a journal for a month, and it might well be used for propaganda purposes, if I succeed."

"By God!" he cried, "have you, then? Do you see the dramatic possibilities of that? Oh, I'll not spare you now! I'll have every drop of your blood! I'll strip you naked, heaven help me! You'll go down into the arena for wild beasts to devour, but there'll be millions to see you die, and it will not be for nothing. Oh, you'll be a picturesque heroine, if I can manage it! We'll send you like a fire-ship into the enemy's fleet. You've been indiscreet, girl—it was madness to endanger our plan by putting anything into writing, but I'll forgive that now! There have been martyrs before, Nomé, but when we burn you at the stake the fire will light up the world! By God, I envy you!"

He looked at her now, much as one looks at a thoroughbred horse before the race, noting her points. Not one escaped him. Her burning black eyes, the fresh, dainty color mantling her cheeks, the rare grace of her spirited head set so buoyantly upon the perfect neck, her gracile, poetic hands—and, above all, the divine fervor of her soul, illuminating every glance, every

gesture, ringing in every cadence of her voice. She sat, submissive to his scrutiny, her cheek on fire with the violence of his admiration and the heart-breaking cruelty of the picture he had painted. It cut her as with knives, but the pain exalted her—she rose to the ecstasy of sacrifice, kindling to a sublime sense of impersonality under the spell.

"I had hoped that you would enter the secret service with Madame Spiritan," he went on, "for we need help there. Your charms would serve, if you were willing to spend them on aristocratic dupes, the way Belle Spiritan does. But you're not the temperament to go into the subtleties of such machinations—I see that now. You're not clever enough for an international spy. You're too intense, you're too egoistic to adapt yourself to the thousand polite acts that are necessary. Belle Spiritan's quite the type for that—you're for the grand heroics. You are to advertise the Cause, to illuminate our errand and purpose, as I'm to stand behind you all and pull the wires. What does it matter who gets the fame or the reward or the pain and the shame, so long as the Cause goes on? Now, for your sentimental problem I don't care a whit, except as it weakens your nerve. Before you went out, that night, I asked you if you could kill the man you loved, if the Cause required it. Can you make the same answer now?"

"I can—you know I can! But it must be soon. For God's sake, let the thing come quickly!"

"How can I be sure?" he insisted. "You are, emotionally, in a state of unstable equilibrium. It is too much to ask of a woman. Your heart must revolt!"

"Can't you see," she cried, "that I have gone too far, now, to recede? Had I known, that night, who Lord Felvex was, I might have wavered for a moment, though I would have tried my best. But now, when I have once failed after having accepted the errand, how can I give it up till it is accom-

plished? How can I ever face myself till I have proved myself worthy of this sacrifice? How can I now prefer my own personal happiness to the good of the Cause? I must trust to your judgment that no other victim will serve, but I beg you to try me. Most of all, most potent and paramount of all reasons—I have confessed my love to Lord Felvex!"

"What? You have spoken to him of this?"

"I have spoken. In fact, I have agreed to leave his house within a week. For that reason alone it must be done soon. Can't it be done tonight?"

"What mischief else have you done, with your damned emotions?" he asked bitterly. "A week, you said? Well, I hope that will suffice. But it is not all so easy as you think. I am afraid of the Circle. Much has happened since you left, and I am very anxious and uncertain."

"For a month—ever since the affair in Westchester Square—the Circle has been in a bad state. O'Brien has made a lot of trouble. You have been suspected, and your loyalty has now been directly impeached. It has been all I could do to hold the members under my control. And it is more than ever before necessary to hold them. We are not nearly so strong as we were. We are obtaining no new recruits, while the foreign sections are holding their own, and more. I cannot afford to go against the opinions of the majority now, for we are near a crisis. I must play them as one plays children to hold the Circle together, or there will be a split and O'Brien will lead a seceding party that will hurt us a good deal with its indiscretion. I have had my finger on the pulse of this affair, and I know to a dot just how far I can go. Previously, I have swayed them, and I have convinced the majority that we must adopt Fabian tactics, awaiting the proper time to strike. But I have carried the policy of 'masterly inactivity' as far as it will go, and luckily, there is no necessity of delaying matters much longer."

"But now, Irma Strieb has threat-

ened the whole situation with her damnable jealousy of you. I understand it now, and I don't see why I didn't notice it before. She should never have been sent to Lord Felvex's house, and least of all as a servant. She is dangerous. She has only hinted before, but now she knows your relations with Felvex, and she has joined O'Brien to explode the information in the Circle, and if she does, it may blow me up with you. I can't force them any longer—they must be managed. My own influence is tottering, but if I can only hold them for two days I'll have no trouble in regaining all my power, and more."

"But why have you delayed so long, Mangus?" Nomé asked. "It seems to me that you should have struck long ago. If we made our demonstration, the general danger would hold the Circle together, wouldn't it?"

Mangus spoke in a lower key.

"I must confide in you," he said. "I can't play my hand alone any longer. The situation is critical. You must know, from what Belle Spiritan told you, that we are involved in larger issues than the mere assassination of one man who happens to have been our enemy, though that is all O'Brien believes, or cares. For two years I have been consolidating the foreign sections until we can act together along a single line of attack, rationally and vigorously, in a truly international movement. I have spent the best part of my life preparing for this. Joined with me, now, in a secret coalition, are the chiefs of every foreign section, and they are in constant communication with me through a central operator under my orders at Berne. He acts as a bureau of information and direction, but the key to the whole situation is in my hand. My will is supreme in the international committee, but I shall lose all influence if I cannot hold my own section."

"Why not tell the Circle?" asked Nomé.

"It would be too dangerous," he replied. "This action is too important. One can never be sure there are no

spies in our camp. It was for that reason I dared not tell them, last month, just what work was planned for you. Of course they know now. But if word leaked out, every foreign section would be in danger, and most of the members on the Continent are marked men. Such news has leaked out before, and now we are closely watched. A year ago we perfected all the details for an international demonstration. Every section was pledged to act in unison on a certain day. The time was set, the agents selected, the victims were chosen. Every single attempt failed!"

"Then Lord Felvex's death was no part of such a plot?" Nomé asked.

"Not then, for the thing seemed impossible. Matters have been adjusted since. Now I am only awaiting news from Berne that every section is ready, and that the day is set. Each section, however, except for the heads, believes its own act to be independent. But I need not tell you of the enormous effect of several simultaneous and successful strokes all over Europe!"

Nomé had listened, fascinated by the details of the plot as it was unrolled before her, rising to the romance of the conspiracy with the eager interest of a child.

"This is war!" she exclaimed. "You have said enough to steady me, even if I had weakened. This is what I have longed for! It is glorious! I am sorry that I have been so querulous, while you have been doing the work of a Titan. I am ready, and I claim my privilege to give my life to this magnificent stroke. To think that the success of it should be endangered by malice and envy, just now, when we should be most strongly united, is dreadful."

"You see my position," said Mangus. "I must have a sure hand. The last attempt was made partially to satisfy O'Brien and his party, who were clamoring for action. I dared not explain why I wanted to wait. Now we can strike, and we shall strike hard; we shall strike again and again while there is one of us left—till we have

forced Humanity to recognize what we stand for."

"How far has O'Brien gone?" Nomé asked. "Can't you convince him that I have delayed only by your orders?"

"I have handled O'Brien well enough so far—it is Irma Strieb who is making mischief now. The two of them are hatching some scheme, and I dare not oppose them too far. It may be that they will compel a new casting of lots, thinking that you are not to be trusted. If you could only convince them that you are, that you can and will do this thing, it would be far better than for me to exert my authority. Perhaps you might carry them with you—you have never failed before—if they would give you a chance to talk."

"Let me try! I must do this thing. If I do not, it spells ruin for me. If I am discountenanced by the Circle I have nothing left to live for. I have cast my lot irrevocably with the Cause—I cannot go to Lord Felvex now, I cannot go back to my old place at home."

"Listen!" said Mangus. "The Circle meets this evening. You will find them on the offensive, a majority, no doubt, against you. But you might try to conciliate them. That is the reason I sent for you. The time is so near now, that I cannot risk any uncertainty or quarreling. What the Circle decides, I must accept. We may have word from Berne at any moment, and that moment we must strike. Can you come tonight? We meet at seven o'clock."

"I will come," Nomé answered. "I left word that I would be at home for dinner, but I can explain that. I think I can stay away till ten safely enough, without causing any alarm. But Lady Felvex receives tonight, and I must be there, as she has invited several friends to meet me."

"Yes, I know," said Mangus. "Belle Spiritan will be there. Any word to you I need to send, later in the evening, I can get to her. Now you must dine alone. I dare not go with you, for the police are very

active nowadays. And the moment the blow falls London will be alive with detectives. We have given up our headquarters in Bloomsbury, and we are meeting in the King's Road. I'll give you directions for finding the place."

IX

OFF the King's Road, in Chelsea, between the "Seven Bells" and the Vestry Hall, stands a two-story brick building, decorated in the Georgian style. It is ornate, considering its original use as a brass-foundry. A huge iron gate supported by massive stone posts shuts it off from the street, and passing through this, one goes up a sort of lane, between brick walls, to the imposing front. This approach is vulgarized by rows of terra-cotta chimney-pots, for the storage of which the building is now used, and permits one to get close enough to the facade of the edifice to examine its sadly damaged details. In the cellar of this place, several compartments of which were at this time used for wine-vaults, the Circle met.

There is another less conspicuous entrance to the cellars, however, and to this Nomé was directed. Corrington street leads off the King's Road, and before, in its wanderings, it regains that thoroughfare it turns two right angles, both toward the left. A little bun-shop upon the first part of this passage had been rented by Mangus, and opposite the rear door of the property one found a side entrance to the drain-pipe works.

Nomé, at about seven o'clock, entered the shop and saw a familiar figure sitting behind the counter, one of the women of the Circle. A nod was given and exchanged, and, without a word being spoken, Nomé was directed by a gesture through a tiny bed-sitting-room to the rear door. She opened this, took three or four steps across a paved close, and opened the great door of the works.

She found herself in a square, bare, lofty anteroom, facing a huge pair of

double doors. At her left was a wooden hatchway covering a stair leading downward. Upon the solid framework of this Ospovat was waiting.

He came to her and kissed her hand. "Oh, Nomé, I'm so glad you came!" he said. "I was so afraid you would not be able to get here. Things have gone far, but I know you can make them believe in you."

"I shall try. Have they all come?"

"O'Brien and Mangus and Irma Strieb you may be sure are here early, and about a dozen have come. It is not seven yet."

"What is the need of this extra precaution? Is there any new danger?"

"Mangus has been watched, and O'Brien, too. A week ago Frisk was arrested and has been held, though they have no evidence. We can't be too careful, for there'll be a hue and cry as soon as anything is done. I am terribly afraid that my call on you may have aroused suspicion, but I don't know whether the police have marked me or not."

He lifted the heavy wooden doors and led the way down the steep stairway along a short passage lighted by a single candle set in a saucer. Turning a corner to the right, they found themselves in a wide cellar, two walls of which were lined with rows of casks piled high to the ceiling, festooned with cobwebs. A small table stood on the dirt floor. Upon it was a lamp whose rays shone upon the faces of Mangus and O'Brien seated together in earnest conversation. The old leader's brows were drawn tensely, tracing a web of lines across his forehead and about his deep-set eyes. The Fenian's red countenance, loose lip and watery eyes gave him more the appearance of a bull than usual. Sitting and standing in groups other members were waiting for the rest of the Circle to appear.

Ospovat retraced his steps to stand guard at the head of the stairs, and Nomé walked into the room. Irma Strieb's gaze was fixed upon her, like a waiting bayonet.

O'Brien drew back as Nomé approached him and extended her hand.

"Is it as bad as that, O'Brien?" she asked calmly.

"Faith, that's for you to tell us," he replied.

"I have nothing to tell you that you shouldn't know already. When I give my friendship I do not take it away at the whim, like you!"

"What you gave was a soap-bubble, I fear, girl, and a breath of high life has broke it entirely."

"You do me wrong, O'Brien, and you know it! You have a quick, Irish temper, and it will turn again when you know me better."

"I know too much now. I could stand no more, even if you were my own daughter, as I liked to think you, Nomé!"

Mangus interrupted. "No more of this, now! We're not here to snarl over personal quarrels, like children. God! Was there ever a cause so holy that it did not break up into factions because of jealous bickerings? We'll have you say what you have to say when we are all here, O'Brien, and then Nomé can answer as she likes. Leave us a minute, please, I want to talk to her."

O'Brien turned away to join Irma Strieb and stood with a knot of their friends in one corner of the room, and Nomé sat down at the table wearily.

"O'Brien is in an ugly mood," Mangus said in a low tone. "You may have a hard time winning him over, but I trust you to do it. Irma Strieb is more dangerous. She's capable of anything. I shall have her watched after tonight. When I think of the trouble they are making now when all should go smoothly, I think I'd not hesitate to use force, if necessary. But I can't show my hand to anyone but you yet. God! if I had but tools to work with, I could start a revolution tomorrow!"

"Have you any news?"

"Things are going well. Berne is only waiting for word from Vienna and Madrid. The train is all set, and the match ready. That's why this trouble exasperates me. We *must* win this time! I'll make any sacrifice in

order not to fail. I'll not hesitate to sacrifice *you*, if necessary!"

There were still many of the Circle who were willing to welcome Nomé, for the disaffection, centering in O'Brien and Irma Strieb, weakened as it radiated through the group. Half a dozen or more shook her hand, called her "comrade" and fell again under the spell of her personal magnetism and earnestness. These had not known, when she was selected for the hazard of the dice, just what the business in hand was—for all that had been left to Mangus—but, as the event had turned out, the work she had had to do was, of course, discovered. It was no longer a secret that Lord Felvex had been marked for death, and that the deed was still to be done. The consciousness of this fatal mission now with them made the talk more open, for they all shared a common risk. Their eagerness for immediate action was the result of this nervous strain, and the long delay imposed by Mangus had aroused great dissatisfaction.

The numbers increased till, at a quarter-past seven, some twenty persons were present, the women being greatly in the minority. The meetings were always informal, controlled by Mangus's peremptory influence, the definite business of detail being managed by a small committee selected by him. He now called the assembly to order in form.

There was but the single lamp on the table in the centre of the room, and this shone full on the leader's face. The members sat or stood in front of him and at the sides of the cellar. From the entrance at the end of the passage the scene was as if set upon a stage, the back wall of which was formed of the tiers of wine casks, like an enormous honeycomb. Away from the light all was shadowy and ill defined, where arched openings in the walls led to dark caves to the right and left.

Mangus rose and began:

"We have come here tonight, comrades, for but one purpose, and that must be settled as quickly as possible.

It should not take long. I have sent for Comrade Nomé Destin, that she may speak for herself in answer to any charge that may be formally brought against her. I must warn you all that we are approaching a crisis in the affairs of the Movement, and we are one and all in serious danger. To increase that peril by petty strife and revenge may be fatal to the Cause. Comrades have, before this, been taken from us, and we are waging a war that must claim its victims from our side as well as from our enemies.

"So far, in our meetings, we have avoided mentioning any specific objects, and you have left to me the planning and execution of them. Tonight that object must be named. Our present purpose is murder. So men call it, and, though we believe we are using it to noble ends, the one crime binds us together with the same guilt. Our last attempt was frustrated by chance——"

"By cowardice, why don't ye say!" O'Brien burst in.

"But the same chance will render a second attempt, if successful, more useful to the Cause than if the first had succeeded. I cannot and will not explain the precise causes of my delay in ordering a second trial. You must trust me there, implicitly. It is enough to say that it is necessary to wait a certain time, and when that time has come, everything you have grumbled at will be made clear. Nomé Destin was chosen for the assassination, and, by your rule, she should still stand ready to carry out the mission. Has anyone any objection to this?"

O'Brien arose, wiping the sweat from his brow. Nomé, sitting beside Mangus, watched the Irishman, with her hand on her heart.

"I protest!" said O'Brien, and laid a ponderous fist upon the table. "Nomé Destin is proven a traitor to this Cause. She was reared in the lap of luxury, and she has returned to her kind. She is no more one of us in spirit or in deed. She has fallen into the trap set by scheming and effete aristocrats, and she has accepted the

pomp and extravagance of the privileged leisure classes as the station to which her birth entitled her—she has made friends with the Philistines and the Amorites——"

Mangus leaned forward past the lamp and pointed a bony finger at the loud-mouthed Fenian.

"Drop that hackneyed whine, for God's sake, O'Brien! Do you think you are addressing a public-house audience of drunken loafers and cab-drivers? Are you on the tail of a cart contesting a bye-election for a demagogue like yourself? Man, we're talking of red, bloody murder, and we're hunted by the police at this moment! And you slaver cheap rhetoric at us like a board-school graduate! Come out with what you have to say, and don't gabble at the gallery like a fool!"

O'Brien, who was working himself up to the proper pitch, was for a moment disconcerted. Then he broke out afresh, in full brogue:

"And did yez see her a-ridin' forth in a foine chariot with his bloody lordship, if ye plaze? Did yez see her at dinner atin' off thim gold plates wid the man she was sint for to kill?"

"My orders!" snapped Mangus. "My orders were for her to wait, and to wait, and always to wait, and to watch while she waited. What would you have her do?—sulk and brood, or talk of the Movement to its sworn enemy, as no doubt you would have done with your waggling Irish tongue that can't sit still in your mouth, and lose all in an afternoon? She has no need to answer such gammon!"

"And how about the shootin', thin?" O'Brien growled. "Was she sint forth to do a minister of police to death, or to pot-hunt for men who have been forced by that same blackguard out of the chance to make an honest livin'? And was it to save his wretched piffin' life she was sint out for—him who has jailed her own comrades of the Cause, and will have half of us swingin' on the gallows yet, by God? Did yez order that, too, you who are secret chief, and give your orders and have your own favorites?"

"She shot at him and missed. Ospovat saw her—you heard his story!" Mangus hazarded, hoping that, to save the point, Nomé would keep silent on this detail. But she would not. She sprang to her feet.

"It's a lie! I did not. I shot at the robbers deliberately! Do you think I would shelter myself behind an excuse like that? I saw Lord Felvex being beaten to death by thugs, and how could the Cause profit by a massacre like that! Have we no dignity? Was it merely his death we wanted? The deed was to ring out like a trumpet call in solemn warning, not squeak out its little message like a penny whistle! My hands were to be steeped in blood, but not soiled by mud and filth!"

"Then have in Ospovat, too!" O'Brien shouted. "What did he lie to us for? I say there's a nest of treachery here, and we might as well clean it out now. Have him in!"

Mangus tried his best to quell the rising tumult, but O'Brien's backing encouraged him. Mangus turned to Irma Strieb.

"Irma, take Ospovat's place at the door!" he commanded.

"I shall not," she answered, "not till I have spoken, too. I can tell you something of Ospovat, and of Nomé Destin as well, and of the two together and Lord Felvex thrown into the bargain!"

"Tell it out! Tell it out, thin; faith, it's high time for a few words of truth!" cried O'Brien.

The storm broke on Irma's face as she pointed to Nomé. "You have done the fine lady long enough!" she barked in her rage. "I was only fit to be your servant, was I? You have worn the jewels and the kid gloves ever since you came into the Movement to bedevil this Circle with your sheep's eyes, and ever since you came in I've had all the scrapings and the sour swill! You are the queen and I am the drudge. But what work there is for me to do, I do it, while you sit in silks and satins in the drawing-room and make love to your Lord Felvex, under her ladyship's own eyes! Yes, and boast of

it! I heard it from your own lips, and Ospovat won't dare say I lie."

She turned from Nomé to the members, who listened breathlessly. "What do you think of this, comrades? Will you intrust the work of the Cause to a hussy who lives in idleness and luxury while we are hunted from pillar to post by the police? And meanwhile, she sweetens her time with the love and kisses of our worst enemy! Ask her, and see if she denies it! She will never kill that man!"

She sat down and watched for Nomé to answer, her strong yellow teeth showing through the rift between her lips, her red brows lowered, and her coarse hands clenched.

Nomé's breath was coming and going in anger, and her eyes blazed. She rose now, and faced the little assembly. Even in that moment, however, she could not forbear to place herself so that the lamplight should strike her to advantage.

"There is nothing I need to answer, except Irma's last words," she said. "She said that I would never kill Lord Felvex, and she spoke falsely. It is too late for me to mask myself and conceal the things that I hoped with all modesty to keep from you. Since I must think no more of my pride, let me say that it is true that I do love Lord Felvex—I have loved him for four years! I did not know that it was he whom I was appointed to kill—but it would not have mattered, as it does not matter now. I will not answer as to my life at Lady Felvex's house—Irma's insinuations are beneath contempt, and you, who know what I am, will only be sorry for her, that she has sunk so low as to accuse me. But now I claim my privilege of carrying out my appointed errand. I have had my Calvary, let me win my resurrection, my Easter! I have had enough of this pitiful thing called Life—give me that precious, mysterious gift called Death! I am sworn to the Cause—there can be no life left for me, if I am convicted of treason. Do you think that I, who stood ready to sacrifice my life, cannot

sacrifice my love also? I will give his life with mine—there is no other way! It is my right—I was appointed by Fate. What if another victim were chosen to die in my place? Still my lover must die, and if he must go, let me at least go with him. Why not? Are we not all pledged to sacrifice and agony? Would not any one of you do it, were you in my place? We claim no personal feelings here, in this Circle, and I believe that each one of us here is true. O'Brien, Irma, I bear no malice toward you. I believe your attack was caused only by your desire for the good of our Cause. I have nothing to forgive. Only, let me do this thing—let me give myself and all I possess to the Cause! The balm of Time, the wrappings of Distance, all have been torn from my heart's wound. I bleed, and the old familiar love-pain and mortal anguish have returned. I, who have been so long dead, am alive again, and I pray to be sent back into forgetfulness. But, if I am perishable, let me perish resisting—if the void awaits me, do not let me act so as to deserve it! I have a giant in me that is stronger than this pigmy of Love who so torments me. Though I thrill as the sap to spring, I would think, not feel. There is another Order, greater than this disorder in my heart, and I would bear it witness. Believe in me, comrades, as you have believed before, trust me, and let me go to eternal peace!"

She sat down, quivering with the passion of her grief, and let her face fall in her hands. O'Brien, mercurial, susceptible as ever to her fascinating, intense temperament, pushed up to her and laid his great hairy hand upon her shoulder.

"Mavourneen," he whispered, sobbing, "forgive me, and let me love you again!"

Others swarmed up to her and protested their allegiance. She had carried the Circle with her, as she had always carried it, with her silvery tongue and the picturesque abandon of her emotion. But Irma Strieb held herself still aloof, with a sneer curling her face.

"How about Ospovat, then, who tried to fool us with his cock-and-bull story?" she said, in a raucous tone.

"Go and send him down!" said Mangus. "Take his place at the door and wait there. You have done enough mischief here!"

She left, sullenly, and all breathed freer with the withdrawal of her spite.

For awhile Nomé was the centre of a group of comrades, each one of which was anxious of having a farewell word with her. She gave all the color there was to the Circle, for the others were, compared with her, uninspired. Nevertheless, they were all in solemn earnest, determined, tragic, desperate. Upon the dull red heat of their convictions Nomé's emotional fervor danced like a lambent flame, lighting their assemblies with flickering poetic lights. All eyes followed her, all ears listened, she was illumination to their dull, starved hearts, embittered with the wrongs they sought to remedy.

She feasted on this new, last banquet of admiration, and drank deep of the wine of praise so loyally held to her lips, till Mangus, drawing her apart for his last instructions, left the members grouped about the table.

"Nomé," he said in a low voice, "all's not right yet! Irma has set me thinking. I'm not sure of her. She must be watched. If anything should go wrong now, God help the Cause—for we can't. Now I daren't trust you with her again—I'm afraid of her jealousy. Don't go up the stairway you came in by; there's a door out of that cellar over there, that leads up to the front of the building. Here's a key to the outside door. Take it and, when you can slip out unobserved, make haste. I'll talk to them so they won't notice you. And remember the word, '*It is only one of many*'—and shoot to kill! No fumbling! Everything is staked on your nerve. Good-bye, girl, and Heaven bless you!"

He turned to the group about the table, leaving Nomé in the shadow of the wall.

Irma Strieb made her way to the

passage, up the steep wooden stairs, and knocked upon the double doors that coiled the opening above her head. Ospovat lifted them, and gave a hand to help her up.

"Go down to your bread-and-butter-faced mistress," she said. "She's bewitched them again. I'm glad to be out of sight of the fools down there. They're led about by the nose like cattle. I'm to stay at the door here."

He was in no mood to talk to her. He was burning for a sight of Nomé, again triumphant, and eager to rejoice in her victory. He handed Irma the padlock and key, and ran down. At the second step he tripped, lost his balance, and, without a cry, fell over the side of the steps, striking his head upon the paved floor below. As he dropped he threw himself toward the wall. This carried him to the left of the foot of the stair, where he lay unconscious.

Irma, meanwhile, had gone to the outer door, looking down the little lane. For a moment she waited, filled with black thoughts, and the jeering expression on her face changed to something more sinister. She hesitated, took a step toward the hatchway and stood undecided. Then, raising the doors part way, she bent her head down to listen. A subdued babble of voices came to her, and through it she heard Nomé speaking. She pressed her lips together and nodded her head. Then, dropping the door, she went out of the building, into the lane, and walked down the King's Road toward Sloane street.

In ten minutes she was back, and the thing was done. She had enough to think of now to make her brain reel, but in her agony she tried to keep her mind upon Nomé—Nomé, who had beaten her at every point—who had hoodwinked and fascinated her way to the position of a heroine, never paying for her promises in real endeavor. She listened again at the crack of the doors, and fed her jealous rage upon the ring of Nomé's voice, as it came to her, clear and deep as a bell. How she hated it, and Nomé's beauty! Then the voice stopped. There was a buzz-

ing chorus, then O'Brien spoke and laughed his peal of burly noise. Her lip writhed to think how weak he was, and how easily cajoled.

Then the great side doors swung open, and a police captain entered to her.

"Are they still there?" he whispered.

Irma nodded. Her breath came faster now.

He put his head outside and beckoned. A file of policemen came in, and with them several men in citizen's clothes. The doors were silently lifted, and one after another they crept down into the passage below, and formed for the rush. The captain put out the solitary candle. Then they were lost to Irma's sight, like rats in a hole, and she waited for the attack, her eyes staring into the dark, her breast heaving convulsively.

She heard a muttered command, and the force moved down toward the cellar where a dim glow illuminated them, making them as shadowy and unreal as ghosts. Then, a single cry echoed along the passage and rose to her ears. It was O'Brien's voice ringing with terror—then a shot rang out, the glow faded. A babel of fierce shouts filled the dark.

Irma stepped from the stair, threw the doors down with a bang and snapped the padlock into the hasp, locking in friends and foes. Then she threw herself upon the closed hatchway and put her ear to the crack.

For a long time she listened, and her wonder increased. All, now, was as still as death. She could not understand it. There should be such a fight below as would make her shudder at her double revenge. She cared not who fell, all was lost for her. Her mind was cast loose from reason and struggled with blind spite and rage. They should all die, comrade and enemy, the Circle with the police, battling to the end.

It was strange, though, that everything was so quiet! She had expected and feared to hear the horrible discord of carnage, shrieks for help, blows and pistol-shots, and, at least, an attempt

to batter open the doors. Instead—nothing. It was as if the wine-cellar were empty and all her treachery a hideous nightmare.

Her first fury had abated to a dazed perplexity; she could not think. She could neither escape, nor go for help, nor wait. How could forty men and women be swallowed up and disappear into the dark without a sound? She thought she would go mad unless she found out—if, indeed, she were not mad already.

She wearily unlocked the padlock and heaved open the doors. Her feet seemed to be of lead as she stepped down, stair by stair, like a somnambulist. She had no fear or horror, no terror—only a stupefied wonder at the perversity of her brain. Halfway along the passage she stumbled upon a body that lay across her path and heard it move stealthily away, without a word or moan. Near the entrance to the cellar she groped about for the candle, struck a match and held the light over her head.

She had one glance—cowering, terrified men everywhere, flattened against the walls, behind chairs and table, crouching in corners, lying prone and supine upon the dirt floor, friend and foe mingled, shuddering away from one another, doubting horribly, in that darkness, the least sound, the slightest movement. Every man was afraid of every other, fearing to strike lest he should hit a friend, fearing to speak lest he should betray his presence to an enemy. It was a deadlock of horror. The flaring light of her candle picked out the whites of eyes and policemen's buttons and hands held fearfully over shocked faces—all this in one flash she saw.

Then the men started, with a common impulse, breaking for the passage, to escape from the pen. Before she was hurtled aside a violent bolt of fire darted from a corner—there was a deafening report and a sharp sting of pain in her breast.

Irma Strieb fell to the floor, and a crazed, panic-stricken crowd of men rushed over her.

X

"LIFE is so interesting!" Madame Spiritan was saying. "Isn't human nature just splendid? It's enough for me just to sit and watch people, they're all so different and original, and everyone has their own character and aura and psychic filament-things seeking out for their affinities—do you believe in affinities?—and I never did see why their thought-waves don't get all tangled up—perhaps they do, after all; things are usually in such a dreadful mess, aren't they? It's really a wonder that we get along as well as we do. Sometimes I wish I were a fly on the ceiling just to look down at all these foolish creatures, with suckers, or whatever they are, on my feet. No doubt flies are quite as much absorbed in their own affairs as we are, though, and make love for a business, as they do in society, only they increase and multiply more, and it never occurs to them that we are bothering with taxes and esoteric phenomena and fourth dimensions, whatever that is. Mercy me! I never could see why people wanted to bother themselves about any other kind of a thickness; one's quite enough for me, and when a woman has passed thirty and don't worry about getting fat I'm perfectly convinced she's a fool."

She paused and took up her fan, bending gracefully, to smile with abandoned coquetry at Count Pribdoff. But she did not use her eyes upon the count alone. Her gaze made quick adventures about the room, seeking something and returning to the Russian's face. Even as she raised her eyebrows at him, speeding a languishing phrase, her darting eye would go and come again.

Lady Felvex's rooms had filled, but Nomé had not yet returned. She was eagerly awaited by many who had been promised sight of her, for, though she had ceased to be the nine days' wonder in town, so few persons had seen her that much curiosity was still alive. Tales of her beauty and her charm had magnified the popular in-

terest in her adventure, and, as she easily took a prominent place in Lady Felvex's assemblies, her appearance had always provoked much whispering. One heard her name upon many lips tonight. Lady Felvex was visibly embarrassed in accounting lamely for her guest's absence, and one or two were bold enough to suspect Lord Felvex of being worried, if not alarmed, at her absence. Nomé had not returned home for dinner. Count Pribdoff raised his eyebrows and smiled to Madame Spiritan at the news, and that vivacious lady tapped him on the cheek with her fan.

Host and hostess stood to receive their guests where they could get a clear view of the door, toward which they cast frequent glances.

A stream of visitors entered, paid their respects and lounged away, not unusually to the chattering group where Madame Spiritan entertained a crowd of men with bewildering skill. Following a group of Lady Felvex's friends, toward ten o'clock, a young man, immaculately dressed, smoothly shaven, with quick, alert eyes, entered the door, was announced as "Mr. Brillish," and stood awaiting his chance to speak his word of greeting. Lady Felvex flung a look of inquiry at her husband.

"A man from the office," said the minister. "Pass him over to me with a few words."

The young man approached, and the welcome he received from his hostess was in no respect to be distinguished from that which she had given her own friends. The two exchanged complimentary commonplaces, after which Mr. Brillish stepped up to Lord Felvex. The two, in speaking, gradually edged away from the nearby guests.

"We located the gang tonight, my lord," said Brillish.

"Well?" was the minister's reply.

"Raided this evening at about eight o'clock. We took twelve after a pretty tough fight."

"How were they?"

"O'Brien, Lasker, Norwell, Hertzberg and Devonwall, and more of that

set we had not known, and two women."

The minister pulled at his mustache. Then, smiling across the room at a lady who had playfully shaken her fan at him, he said:

"Who were the women?"

"One was the Strieb woman, who was here. She was shot in the lungs and will die. The other one was unknown to us."

Lord Felvex's voice was well mastered as he asked: "What was she like?"

"Dark, probably Spanish, brown eyes, rather good clothes, intelligent. We hope to find out who she is before morning. She may be the woman Brussels was looking for. But it looks nasty. If I might take the liberty of warning you, my lord, of asking you to take precautions——"

"You may not. This is no surprise to me. How did you find them?"

"That's the curious part. The Strieb woman gave information at the Chelsea station, while she was supposed to be on guard. They were meeting in an old wine-cellar. Twelve men were sent, and as soon as they got down into the cellar, the lights went out and the whole lot were locked in a dark pen. The men were ordered not to shoot unless absolutely necessary, but even if they had not, they would have been afraid of killing one another. Then the Strieb woman came down with a light, thinking it was all over, I fancy, and the captain broke for the door, got his men into the passage, and the rest was easy enough."

"You are sure there was no one of consequence besides O'Brien?"

"No one we know. Mangus must have got out before the row, by some other exit."

"I'm sorry. I must have that man. He's worth more than all the rest put together."

"We are after him tonight."

"See that you get him. That's all?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Won't you stay, Mr. Brillish?"

The words were spoken as the company closed in upon the two.

"Thank you, my lord, I must leave immediately."

Both men bowed, and Mr. Brillish withdrew. Lord Felvex took his place at his wife's side.

"I can't think what has become of Nomé," she said. "I am getting alarmed. It is most extraordinary."

"She will come; don't be worried," said Lord Felvex, but his tone was not convinced.

Madame Spiritan, having watched the colloquy between the two men as closely as possible, now moved up to her hosts.

"I trust we shall not be disappointed in meeting Miss Destin tonight," she said cooingly.

"Lord Felvex has just reassured me," said Lady Felvex. "Miss Destin was away for the afternoon and has been detained longer than she expected. She will surely be here before long."

"I am much relieved to hear that," was the reply, and Madame Spiritan sauntered away with the count and renewed her prattle.

She had already received news of the raid, but the details of the affair were unknown to her. She felt herself fairly secure in her position, but she waited anxiously for Nomé's appearance, for it was scarcely to be expected that, with the information now undoubtedly in the hands of the police, the girl was not in grave danger. Madame Spiritan wondered how much the minister already knew. As she masked her doubts and took up her persiflage with Count Pribdoff again, Colonel Grennyngs came into the drawing-room, and, after a few words with Lord and Lady Felvex, trotted up to Madame Spiritan's side.

"How dare you leave so soon, Belle?" he complained. "D'you know I gadded round to your place to bring over that bull pup I promised, you know, and, by Jove, you were gone! Think of your getting away before ten! I was in no end of a rage! He's a beauty, too; all full of points and own grandson of Bultitude Third! And I say, that Céleste of yours is a decent little

thing, don't you know! I don't see how you dare keep such a pretty gal with you, Belle!"

"Keep your hands off Céleste," said Count Pribdoff. "I discovered her, you know!"

"If she's discovered by you she's lost!" said the colonel.

"Peaches and cream, peaches and cream," murmured the count.

"And a spoon," added Madame Spiritan.

"And I say, she showed me a box of roses that had just come for you, Belle—I had a mind to bring some over," said Colonel Grennyngs.

"White roses?" Madame Spiritan asked, with a sudden show of interest.

"No, red."

"Pshaw, how silly—of course they were white. You know I never wear red roses."

"But they were red—I know they were red."

"You're quite sure?"

"Positive!"

"As if it mattered!" laughed Count Pribdoff.

"It matters a good deal," asserted Madame Spiritan. "You evidently don't believe in symbolism."

"Ah—one doesn't send white roses to a married woman, of course."

"Nonsense! I didn't mean that."

"Red is for blood," said the colonel eloquently.

"Or for wine," put in Count Pribdoff.

"Also for currant jelly and strawberries—there's a relativity in all vibration," said Madame Spiritan.

"You don't tell me!" replied the colonel. "Now, I suppose that's one of your clever jokes!"

A flutter of whispers interrupted them, and they turned to see Nomé, star-eyed, in black velvet, enter the room with a grace and finished manner that betrayed no hint of the crisis she had just passed. Madame Spiritan's eyes softened a little as she watched the girl, and her hand was clenched nervously.

Lady Felvex came halfway to meet her guest. Nomé was almost breath-

less with the haste she had made in dressing.

"I am so sorry that I was detained," she said. "I met an old friend and was persuaded to stay for dinner. I hope I haven't caused you any anxiety!"

"I confess that I'm relieved," her hostess replied. "There are several persons waiting to be presented to you, and I didn't want them to be disappointed."

She brought them up to Nomé, and the girl became again the centre of an interested circle. Excitement always stimulated her speech. She was, by this time, keyed up to a high tension by the events of the day and her words came freely. She turned from one to the other, as the discussion became general, and Madame Spiritan's quick perceptions told her, even across the room, that the company, eager for anything new and charmed by the *naïveté* and enthusiasm of the young American girl, were skilfully drawing her out. It was something more than amusement, if less than serious interest, that she read upon their faces; but any lack of sincerity was so well concealed that Nomé's limited experience in society detected no hypocrisy in it.

Madame Spiritan noticed, too, that Lord Felvex, after a word with his wife, had left the room. The spy, with her message now to deliver, could wait no longer. The word must be passed immediately, for the least delay was dangerous. She approached the group that still surrounded Nomé and awaited her chance. The girl blushed dangerously as she recognized her ally.

"One should not need to know why one saves another's life," Lady Felvex was saying.

"One should know why one refuses to save it, and that's my point," Nomé replied. "Lord Felvex saved a comrade's life with great risk to his own, and obtained a Victoria Cross for doing what was no more than his duty—or what he thought was his duty. I admire and respect him for it, surely, for it was unselfish and brave. It is not often that a man's life flowers into so

gallant an act. But none the less was it born of the fetich worship of what he calls honor or duty. Were it a real religion with him would he not use that courage on some more vital conflict than a war of aggrandizement, forced upon his country by an irresponsible ministry? Would he not attempt to save the lives of the thousands of unfortunates by thinking out his principles and acting upon them, instead of accepting this deadly doctrine of *laissez faire*? There are thousands of lives in London in more deadly peril than was that guardsman in South Africa. It seems to me that some of his duty lies there!"

"It depends upon what you mean by 'duty,' Miss Destin," Lady Felvex answered. "It seems to me that most arguments are merely quarrels over the definitions of things. No doubt if we could agree upon the definitions we would easily find ourselves reconciled in our points of view. We spend our time disputing over words, rather than upon real principles of action."

"But definitions are only the embodiments of principles," Nomé maintained. "There you are quarreling over a word yourself. I believe with you that if we could agree upon definitions we would probably agree on lines of action. But what is all philosophy but an attempt to define the universe?"

"What is your definition of the universe, Miss Destin?" asked one of the gentlemen mischievously.

Nomé, seriously absorbed in the discussion, missed the railery in his tone, and, thinking only of the stupidity of his misunderstanding, was about to explain her point elaborately when she became aware of the general smile that rippled about her. She blushed at her own sluggish sense of humor, and Count Pribdoff came to her relief with:

"I should say that the universe was a runaway train on a line full of curves, grades and tunnels."

"I consider it a sort of giant reception where we pay exaggerated respect to a host who never appears," re-

marked Madame Spiritan, as if looking for Lord Felvex.

"I accept the amendment; your definition is better than mine," said the count, smiling.

"It is only one of many," was the enigmatic retort. So trivially was the sentence uttered that it passed for badinage, and the talk went lightly on, but, in speaking, Madame Spiritan looked squarely and seriously at Nomé, taking pains to catch her eye.

The message burst like a bomb in Nomé's mind. Her face again suffused with color, her hand went to her heart with the familiar gesture. Though she made an attempt to disguise her emotion and enter the conversation again, the endeavor was futile; for even had she ever been able to hold her own in the jocose channel into which the talk had turned, the summons she recognized and accepted, that bade her prepare herself for immediate action, startled her more deeply than she had anticipated. There was no escape now, no chance for procrastination and self-regard; the deed must be done! Before, she had gone through a solemn and absorbing preparation, she had had chance to reflect, plan and temporize with the danger; now, to be given the word in the midst of such gay frivolity stunned her. For a moment she could not adjust her mind to the thought that it was come at last.

Nevertheless, she aroused herself, lashing her will to action. It must be done, now! The pistol was upstairs in her chamber—it must be immediately secured. She looked about for Lord Felvex, but he was nowhere to be seen. Then she moved to her hostess's side and waited till she could have word with her alone.

"Will you pardon me if I retire now?" Nomé asked at the first chance. "I am quite fatigued, and utterly unable to talk any more."

"Certainly," Lady Felvex replied. "You do look tired. Try and get a good sleep tonight."

"I would like to speak to Lord Felvex for a few minutes first," Nomé hazarded. "I want to speak to him

about some perplexing business that came up this afternoon."

"I'm so sorry! My husband was called away to his office on important affairs, and he'll not be here till dinner-time tomorrow. He'll be at his office tomorrow morning, however, and you might see him there, if you like."

"Thank you, I may trouble him for a few moments there, as my business is quite urgent. Good night."

On her way out she met Madame Spiritan, who, in the hall, took the girl's hand and pressed it warmly.

"Be brave!" she whispered. "All depends upon you now! I am so sorry you could not come with me, but you to your part of the work and I to mine, and both for the Cause! In case I do not see you again, good-bye, dear! Let me kiss you, Nomé? There—good-bye—I leave for Berne at midnight."

Nomé went up to her room, and for a long time the light shone through the curtains of her windows.

XI

THE reception-room at the Ministry of Police was a large apartment, furnished with many tall mirrors. In these, as she waited for the interview, Nomé caught insistent reflections of herself, her slim, gracile figure gowned in dull red and ermine. These she feared to scan. Already the old distrust had come upon her, and at her second crucial moment she was again unready for action, pushing back the thought of it, the instant doing of it, the how of it, the strict alertness of eye and finger that should have absorbed her while she watched for the first pregnant chance to strike swift and hard. The long suspense had done its work of deterioration in her will and brain. She had so long and so often been put off that her heart was cold now, not hot with the fire of enthusiasm. What she had to do was to be accomplished now only by the resolute holding of her mind to its task. There was no buoyancy in her spirit, no

martyr's vision of attainment—all that was left in her soul was a sense of the inevitability of the sacrifice, and herself an almost passive instrument in the hands of Fate. The fearful approach of action paralyzed her; she acted mechanically, the prey of little tormenting thoughts, whims and fancies. Every impulse was trivial; her mind reeled.

She walked to the window to escape the disconcerting images of herself, and, looking absent-mindedly across the street, she was surprised and puzzled to see Ospovat approaching the opposite corner. What did it mean? He had escaped, then, from that dreadful scene in the cellar, of which she had heard only the morning's rumors. His head was bandaged—he had been wounded. But why was he here, perpetually following her about like a spaniel? Did he, at last, doubt her; he, the one person who had fed her with constant flattering trust? Or—and the thought alarmed her—was he present to make sure that the work was done, in case she should fail? Perhaps Mangus, still uncertain of her, had sent him to reinforce her attempt. The thought spurred her to anger, and she began to lose some of her self-consciousness. She would show them how a woman could die!

A footman entered, came up to her and announced that the minister was ready to receive her. She followed him a little way down the wide hall, opening a door into Lord Felvex's office. He was there waiting, with his back to a marble fireplace, and came forward with outstretched hand.

She took a step backward and avoided his greeting.

"Wait!" she exclaimed hoarsely; her own voice seemed dreadful to her. "What I have to say will not take long, and I prefer to stand."

He looked at her calmly, and she could not help admiring his equanimity. He was sure of himself—but he was a man. Were all men sure? Even Ospovat, whom she had always counted her inferior, he was sure, too; he was a man—and she had to oppose this man's

strength with her woman's weakness, as Mangus had said. These thoughts raced through her mind.

"What can I do for you, Nomé?" said the minister, his eyes never leaving her, watching her slightest movement. He had drawn gradually nearer.

She must be believed in, whatever happened. Her soul demanded the explanation of her hypocrisy. She would tell him, in few words, and then—

"I have come to tell you what I am," she began. "Your kindness has been killing me by inches, and I can't bear to play a false part before you any longer. It is true I saved your life, but you owe me nothing—nothing! I have been made the victim of a romantic episode, a popular, melodramatic heroine, and, after all had happened, I have become your friend again! Why? Because I set out to kill you! Because I tried and failed."

She paused a moment, scarcely daring to look at him. But she saw no surprise in his face, no shock of horror, only a pity that she revolted at. She wondered at his self-control, he, who was so soon to die, while she was unsteady, gasping. "I tried to kill you!" she repeated querulously, disappointed that her words caused no sensation.

"I know it," the minister replied.

"You knew it? How?"

"I have known about it for some time. I have suspected it for a longer time still."

"Thank God for that!" she cried. "Whatever I am, I would not be thought a hypocrite. Yet you made friends with me?"

"Why not? You saved my life, after all." He smiled.

"Don't! don't!" she wailed. "Why did I permit myself to speak to you here? Why do I go on talking now? There's self, self, self! Oh, I have almost spent my force in words now—I know what Mangus meant! What have I to do with pride? Why can't I act?" She spoke in an agony of weakness and shame.

"Nomé dear," he began, and then caught a sudden closing of her lips, a

change in her mood. He saw that something had turned in her, rousing her to a despairing resolve.

He stretched out his hand. "Don't, Nomé!" he commanded.

Her face was convulsed, but she paused. "What do you mean?" she said lamely. Even then, for her honor, for her Cause, she knew that she could not withdraw her hand from her muff and fire.

"You have a revolver there," he said, speaking in a measured, deliberate tone. "You have come to shoot me today, as you went before. I know everything, all your secret, and I have been expecting this. But you will not do it. You are too much of a woman, your heart is too true. You cannot believe that a human life must be taken to prove a wild, impossible theory. You have lived in a world of sentiment, and you have consorted with visions. But you are no visionist. You have found the one real truth, your love for me—our love for each other. You have not the courage to deny this one great thing; you have not the courage to shoot me. You are afraid of me, for you know that I am right. If you can, then shoot me now!"

He spoke as if hypnotizing her, almost brutally compelling her will. She yielded, as the sleeper yields, to his will, and could not draw her revolver. She felt her last drop of resolution ebb away. Yet the situation was so hackneyed, so patently melodramatic, that she loathed herself for having allowed it to become possible, for succumbing to a test so threadbare. Was she to be defeated by such claptrap means? His assurance appalled her—he was all man and she all woman, his inferior. She tasted the dregs of bitterest mortification.

Then, her glance wavering, her brain reeling under the strain, she hurried from the room, to shut out the sight of him.

Ospovat was coming up the stairs, white-faced, staring, his mouth open with excitement. She dared not face him, and staggered into the reception-room, sickening at thought of her in-

decision. Ospovat ran up to her, and found her in a flood of tears.

"Did you do it?" he cried. "I didn't hear the shot! Is he dead? Nomé, Nomé, tell me!" Then, as she refused to answer, his heart broke at the thought of her cowardice.

"My God, Nomé! You haven't failed *again*, have you? Tell me, Nomé! Ah, never mind, my love! Quick, give me the pistol—I shall save you this time!"

Without stopping for her protest, he wrenched the revolver from her hand, and ran down the hall. Nomé put her hands to her eyes. The next instant two muffled shots rang out. Then almost immediately Ospovat came back, slammed the doors of the reception-room shut, and ran to kneel at her side. He forced the pistol into her trembling hand.

All his excitement was gone now, and though he spoke quickly through his teeth, he was unnaturally deliberate. His voice was as tender and soothing as a mother's to her child.

"It is done, Nomé—he is killed at last! I have saved your honor! No one will know that you didn't do it. No one saw me. I will tell them that you shot him. Quick, now—they are coming! Don't you understand? I have saved you—you shall have all the glory! Take the pistol, for God's sake, and say that you did it!"

There were cries from below, and footsteps were heard running down the hall. Nomé turned deathly pale and ill. Must it always end this way, the man strong and determined, the woman weak and undecided? Little Ospovat had beaten her at the end. Why could she not have risen to his height?

No—but one thing she could do! Ospovat's courage had illumined her at last. It would do no good, but it would be what a man would do, at least. She put the revolver quickly, passionately, to her heart and fired.

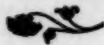
Several men rushed into the room and sprang furiously at the little Russian Jew, who was now quivering with horror. With a terrible effort he

withdrew his eyes from Nomé's bleeding form upon the floor, and looked haggardly up at them.

Then he gave her back her honor, and his share in the glory of the Cause she had betrayed.

"Yes, take me, take me!" he said.

"But she shot him!—this girl here, Nomé Destin, she shot him, and now she has shot herself as well. *She did it!* Do you understand? I only helped. It was her work. She is the heroine of the Cause! She was wonderful!"



THEIR ONE HARMONY

"AND did they never agree?"
"Yes, finally—to get a divorce."



HISTORY AND FASHION

THE man whose wife and three daughters always dressed in the newest style was settling the usual monthly bills.

"History may repeat itself," he observed, with something like a weary lift to his eyebrows, "but Fashion never does."



NOT YET!

THE SON—Can't you let me have that hundred dollars, *pater*? You once said that you would share your last cent with your children.

THE FATHER—Yes, but I haven't got to my last cent yet.

AN INQUIRY

SHE—But I couldn't make her listen to me.

HER HUSBAND—Really? How did she get out of it?

A SONG FOR MAY

By Maurice Francis Egan

C HAMPAGNE is well for firewood time,
And Burgundy when high winds blow,
And Bourbon with a dash of lime
Is good enough for days of snow;
But May wine, made in Germany,
Is, lovely May, the drink for thee!

The symphony of April rain
Is sounding from the roof and hill,
And through the shining window-pane
We see the wild azaleas fill
With freshened life—with wine as sweet—
As sweet as May—and May they greet!

Think not—oh, joy!—of winters past;
Think not—delight!—of autumn's gloom;
"Old Time away his cloak has cast,"
A doublet gay of peachy bloom
He wears, with fairy-stitched hose,
Embossed with every bud that glows.

There is a daisy in his cap,
Like yellow tulips is his hair,
Of dandelion shines the strap
That holds the bugle he doth wear;
Old Time is young; he laughs, he cheers,
He sings of hope, of happy years!

There's amber in the buttercup
Which every bird that likes may sip,
And many a yunker takes a sup
Of May wine, fragrant o' the slip
Of that green herb of German land
Which warms the heart and nerves the hand.

So, sack and sherry put away,
And let the cobwebs weave and cling
To port and Bordeaux: bright Tokay
Shall sparkle best in early spring;
For the herb-brew of Germany
Is, lovely May, the drink for thee!

AFTER VICTORY

GRANT me strength to face my conquered;
 Teach me the smile of pride;
 Give me patient endurance
 For my deeds that are glorified;
 But after the splendor sweeps past,
 One little hour to abide
 Alone and in darkness at last,
 With the simple joys that have died.

FLORENCE WILKINSON.



A REAL HUMAN PLAY

ONCE upon a time there was a king who was very much interested in human nature. So intense was his curiosity upon the subject that every means was employed by his subjects to gratify it.

Any kind of an entertainment that threw any light upon the subject of human nature was sure to excite the king's interest.

One day a theatrical manager, who was an original genius, presented himself at court.

"Your majesty," he said, "with your permission I will entertain you with my latest production, which aims to portray all the various types of man."

"Delighted," said the king.

The curtain rose promptly, and the first actor came forward.

"I am a real, genuine, selfish man," said he. "I care for nobody but myself. My own interest is the main thing with me."

He retired, and another man came forward.

"I am wicked," said the second man. "I glory in crime. I like to kill. I am naturally cruel."

He was in turn succeeded by a third man.

"I am," said the third man, "honest, or at least I try to be. I love my neighbor and treat him as well as I know how."

He gave place to a fourth actor, who, without hesitation, said:

"I am a natural-born liar. I deceive when I can and never tell the truth when I can avoid it."

Said the fifth actor: "I am just plain mean. I am naturally so and I can't help it."

Said the sixth actor: "I am generous. I just love to do good to others."

By this time the king was beginning to yawn. He raised his hand to stop the performance and summoned the theatrical manager before him.

"Look here," he exclaimed, "this is the most tiresome thing I have ever seen. The idea of your getting together so many actors just to have them come out and tell what they are. What's the point of this play, anyway?"

"Why, that's the point," said the manager. "The entire company consists of only one man, with changes of costume."

TOM MASSON.

THE LION OF LYNDON

By A. Van Dwight

LITTLE Mrs. Mowbray Truxton was sitting on the clubhouse veranda, uttering literary enthusiasms in her absurdly disproportionate voice, for the benefit of a small but admiring audience.

"It's alive," she was saying. "It smells of earth—such strength, color—such biting, stinging—"

"May I ask what kind of cheese you're talking about?" interrupted a tall young man in tennis flannels, appearing suddenly in the doorway.

"Billy," said Mrs. Truxton with some asperity, "you have always made the most of a brother's privilege to be disagreeable to his sister, but now you are getting positively vulgar."

"I don't want to be vulgar," said Billy with humble pathos, "but I really hoped it might be cheese, you know, for I'm horribly hungry. Yes, thanks, a little tea, if you please, Miss Newbury, and six or eight large muffins."

"Was my sister speaking of the immortal Tatterly, by any chance, Miss Weston?" Billy resumed, as he neared the end of his first muffin. He addressed the quiet girl who was staying with the Newburys, as the person most likely to respond.

"When you came," answered the quiet girl, without looking up from her embroidery, "we were talking about 'When the Fates Change Horses,' by—by—who was it by, Mrs. Truxton?"

"McTurk," said Mrs. Truxton. "Please don't encourage Billy, Miss Weston; it only makes him worse."

"What, another?" groaned Billy, his head in his hands. "Has Tatterly a rival? Strange how my sister likes to have her intellectual emotions con-

stantly stirred with a long-handled spoon, while I——"

"Billy," said his sister coldly, "don't you ever remind yourself of that young man in 'The Admirable Crichton' who was always trying to make epigrams and who had to be taken out every little while to have cold water poured on his head?"

"No, Janet, when I remind myself to pour anything on anybody's head, it shall be coals of fire. I shall begin at once and invite you all to play tennis with me. I have even gone so far as to hunt up a specially long-handled racquet for you, Janet, with which you may be able to get a ball up over the net without having to lob—provided you jump up, of course."

"No, run along. No one wants to play with you." Mrs. Truxton was really incensed by this last jibe directed at her tenderest point. Mrs. Mowbray Truxton was a very small woman indeed, but she had been described, perhaps more accurately, as a miniature giantess. In her own mind she considered herself to be very much on the grand scale, and she carefully conformed to that scale in every possible particular. Her notes were inscribed in a huge, inky, masculine character, carefully cultivated and decidedly impressive when executed with a quill on rough paper. She had not been displeased to hear that her admirers described her conversation as "terse—rugged—epigrammatic." She had taken to herself a six-foot husband and a dog as big as a small pony. The Truxton horses were enormous and their break quite the tallest in the colony. It was even characteristic of

Janet Truxton that she should have chosen Tatterly for her literary passion—not that most people don't admire Tatterly nowadays.

"Perhaps some day she'll be sorry she wasn't kinder to her little brother," sighed Billy. "I'm dining out tonight, and I think I'm coming down with epizootic."

"I believe you dine out five nights a week regularly all summer," said Euphemia Newbury, disregarding the symptoms. "What it is to be a detached bachelor!"

"In Lyndon we are driven by a cruel necessity to detach them from their nurses and ask them to dinner at an almost criminally early age," said Mrs. Truxton, glancing spitefully at the youthful Billy.

"Well," Euphemia Newbury continued, "it's mighty different being a detached spinster, I can tell you. We only get asked to lunches. This colony is so neatly paired off and married, two and two, that there are only eight or ten possible dinner combinations. If anyone does import an extra man from outside, there is sure to be an extra girl stopping with somebody else. And so it goes——"

"And yet," said Billy, interrupting again, "you all scorned Mrs. Tommy Braithwaite's nice, philanthropic plan for asking husbands separate from wives and vice versa."

"Humph! We all knew Dolly Braithwaite too well to believe that we'd ever see the vice-versa part of it," said his sister skeptically. "But it really is ghastly," Mrs. Truxton went on, "to meet precisely the same people over and over and to know exactly whom one is going to meet beforehand. I am positively hungry for someone new and really interesting to take me in to dinner."

"Yes," said Euphemia Newbury, "that is the trouble with an isolated little colony like this. When any one of us has by any chance secured an interesting man, he always toots it from the housetop, and as the Braithwaites haven't done any tooting, I'm afraid there is small hope for you tomorrow night, Janet."

"You see, Miss Weston," said Billy to the quiet girl, who had put down her embroidery to listen, "we only get one or two very tame lions a year up here, and those are apt to be sulky and disappointing. When the Braithwaites had the distinguished authoress of 'A Flat in Florence'——"

"Woman was a fool—book was idiotic!" Mrs. Truxton interjected hoarsely.

"Well, we supposed she was going to be brilliant, anyhow," Billy continued. "And the Braithwaites made a point of getting Polton to meet her, because he's considered to be clever. Well, Polton told me afterward, and swore to it, that she never said a word to him during the entire dinner, until along toward the ice she happened to look around and see a big Grueby vase in the corner, and then all she said was, 'Good jug!'"

The quiet girl's eyes laughed appreciatively. They were such nice, understanding gray eyes. It was a pity that embroidery should engross so much of their attention. Even now she showed signs of taking it up again, and to avert such a catastrophe Billy hastened on to another anecdote.

"And the Cuthbert-Joneses had an Austrian baron who asked Janet if it were possible she believed in spontaneous evolution, when, in trying to explain our Colonial Dames to him, she mentioned that probably the Painted Lady hadn't a grandfather."

"Please tell me, who is the Painted Lady?" asked the quiet girl. Billy mentally patted himself on the back as he watched her fold the bit of linen about the tiny hoop and stow it away in a tinier bag.

"Why, the Painted Lady," answered Euphemia Newbury, "is the accident that will happen in the best regulated of colonies. Her name is Mirabel—Mrs. Mirabel—and she took that cottage over there behind the club last spring. She wears a yellow wig and a stunning complexion and looks altogether as though she had been nourished exclusively on cold bottles and hot

birds. A queer-looking little old woman lives with her—her mother, I believe. But if you want to see her, here she comes in all her glory, or some of it."

Coming up the poplar-shaded road at the ponderous dog-trot of a fat white pony was a low, comfortable basket phaëton. It was shaded by a top trimmed with a luxuriant blond fringe which seemed to harmonize admirably with the luxuriant blond lady who reclined beneath it and permitted the reins to hang loose on the pony's broad back. Mrs. Mirabel seemed to be lost in a pleasant reverie, and quite oblivious of the concentrated attention of the club veranda.

Her famous complexion was shaded by a broad-brimmed hat, but an occasional glint suggested the presence of diamonds in her ears. The intervening tennis courts might have blurred one's impression of another woman, but Mrs. Mirabel seemed clearly visible at that distance.

The impression she made upon her observers was decided, and one that, from Lyndon's point of view at any rate, seemed more than to justify Lyndon's rejection of her.

Even that freckled, waddling pony would surely have found difficulty in making an equine friend among the smart cobs and high-stepping, well-groomed hackneys of the colony. If Mrs. Mirabel had been seeking her kind in coming among their equally smart and well-groomed masters, truly she had been misguided.

"That's the way she spends most of her time," commented Euphemia Newbury, as the phaëton disappeared from their view. "Jogging around the wood roads alone, except once in awhile when some queer-looking man comes down for over Sunday."

"Can't imagine what the woman ever thought she wanted to come here for," declared Mrs. Mowbray Truxton.

"Perhaps she thought that because the place is so small we would have to call on her," suggested Euphemia Newbury.

"Has none of you ever met her?" asked the quiet girl.

"Yes, I have," said Euphemia. "One time last spring I turned my ankle by falling off a fence getting dogwood. It hurt awfully, and I really couldn't refuse when the Painted Lady happened along and offered to drive me home. She was very sympathetic, and when she put me down she asked me to come and see her."

"And did you go?" asked the quiet girl.

"No," answered Euphemia. "I might have, but a little while after that I met her in the post-office and she said, 'When are you coming to see me, my dear?' Of course, when a woman tries to force herself on you like that, and calls you 'my dear' into the bargain—why, it's too much."

Euphemia Newbury came from Boston, and would have had small use for endearments, even from her friends, had they been inclined to such soft dalliance.

"We should really be grateful to her," said Billy, "for lending a much needed spice to our social existence, by providing us with someone to be nasty to—someone to exclude and thereby demonstrate our exclusiveness. Hitherto, we have lacked the charm of *chiaroscuro*—Oh, Jones!" Billy made a megaphone of his hands and hailed the first of the carriages returning from the five o'clock train from town. "Can we get in one or two sets before dinner?"

"Sure," answered the genial voice of Mr. Cuthbert-Jones, clear and sharp on the crisp evening air, as he wheeled his horse into the lane. In another moment he had jumped from his red-wheeled break and was saying: "Oh, by the way, Mrs. Truxton, I fancy the Braithwaites have a nice little surprise for you tomorrow night. Guess who was on the train coming out?"

"Tatterly," suggested Billy.

"Well, how on earth did you know, Billy?" said Mr. Cuthbert-Jones, disappointed of his sensation.

Billy didn't get a chance to say that he hadn't known.

"You don't mean it, really, do you?" the Newburys shrieked in chorus.

"But however did the Braithwaites get him?" gasped Mrs. Truxton when she had recovered enough breath. "They aren't a bit his sort, and he is such a tremendous lion!"

"Just what I thought myself. But I'm not absolutely certain they have got him," admitted Mr. Cuthbert-Jones. "You see, I only spotted them on the station platform, and, of course, I recognized Tatterly right away from the magazine pictures. I'd have hung around to make sure whose trap he got into, but my mare was in one of her retiring moods and kept cramping me into old Mrs. Polton until I heard her telling her coachman what she thought of me, and then I realized it was time to move on. Here comes Braithwaite now. By Jove! he's alone! Maybe Mrs. Tommy has picked up Tatterly for a drive."

Mrs. Mowbray Truxton flew down the steps to meet the approaching mail-cart. "Oh, Mr. Braithwaite," she cried, "is it really true that you have the great Mr. Tatterly stopping with you? And you've asked us to meet him! How dear of you!"

"Awfully sorry to disappoint you, Mrs. Truxton," said Tommy Braithwaite, handing the reins to his groom and looking down with a curious smile at the breathless little woman; "but I really must admit that I haven't. Miss Newbury, won't you please give me some rum with a little tea in it, *à la Russe*?"

"Don't dally and pause for refreshment. You don't know what this means to us, man," said Billy tragically.

"Well," said Braithwaite, "you see, I had a slight smoking-room acquaintance with Tatterly once, goin' across, and I presumed on that to speak to him when I saw him on the train to-

night. He was very nice and civil—talked a lot, told me he was coming out for the week-end with a friend—a woman he'd known years ago in Australia and hadn't seen since. She was by all odds the cleverest woman he ever knew, he said—masculine strength and breadth of view combined with feminine intuition, and a whole lot more stuff like that. Do give me a chance to get a little nourishment, you slave-drivers!"

"No, no!" howled Billy indignantly. "Do you think we are going to sit here and watch you eat when there may be a lion around loose in Lyndon, for all we know! Go on, now; you'd got as far as feminine intuition."

"Well, it seems that this friend of Tatterly's has written a bang-up book—somethin' about changin' horses, I think he said."

"Not McTurk!" Mrs. Truxton exclaimed. "McTurk a woman!"

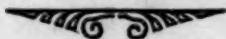
"Yes, yes. That's it; McTurk. Well, then, this genius has picked out a quiet little hole in the country, where she can think up another, with no one to bother her.

"By and bye he asked me where I was gettin' off. I told him Lyndon. 'Why,' he said, 'then you must know her——'"

Here Mr. Braithwaite, having clearly indicated the imminence of his climax, interrupted himself somewhat ostentatiously with a muffin and leaned back in his chair to enjoy the effect upon his audience. But the moment for pause was ill-chosen, for before the muffin could be swallowed, fate had intervened and taken the climax forever out of Mr. Tommy Braithwaite's keeping.

Once more the fat pony and the basket phaëton were coming down the road. The blond lady was still unmindful of the scrutiny of Lyndon, but this time she was listening to the eager speech of a man sitting beside her.

Even across the tennis courts the man was unmistakable.



A REMINISCENTIAL DINNER

By John O'Keefe

YES, down these stairs. Why, how they creak!
But recollect, my dear,
'Twas seven years ago this week
That we had dinner here.
Time's feet have worn the planking thin,
But it is also true,
Concerning thinness, he has been
Quite generous to you.

The same old basement! No, I see
It's wider. Still, 'tis clear
The years have broadened you and me
Proportionately, dear.
The same old pictures on the wall;
The vintners' signs the same;
Indeed, I fancy I recall
The flyspecks on the frame.

We'll take the same old table, dear.
Let's see—the left-hand row.
No, no, not there! The fourth one—here!
I think I ought to know.
Oh, well, if you insist, the third.
Your memory may be right,
Considering, dearest, what occurred
Upon that other night.

The same old chairs! Be careful, sweet;
You know you shook the stairs,
And these were never strong of seat,
These spindle-legged chairs.
The same old coat-hooks! . . . Waiter, here!
What, you? My faith, 'tis so!
The same good Frederic, my dear,
Of seven years ago.

But no, his hair is gray, alas!
Ah, dearest, it is thus
We see within another's glass
How time has dealt with us.
What? Angry, dear? I'm sure I meant
No reference to you.
Believe me, it is evident
Your hair's as good as new.

THE SMART SET

The same old— Nay! remembrance may
 Be just a bit too bright—
 'Tis not the tablecloth today
 We had that other night.
 The menu, please. Well, as I live,
 The same old bill, I think:
 Yes, fifty cents—and still they give
 The same empurpled ink.

The soup's the same, and yet its taste
 Is not exactly right.
 Some folk atone for growth in waist
 With loss of appetite.
 There, there! It's really quite absurd
 The way you take offense.
 I meant myself; I've not referred
 To *your* circumference!

What have they in the line of fish,
 Maturer tastes to pique?
 Why, dear, it is the selfsame dish
 That led me on to speak.
 "Two soles" my order was, and ere
 The platter had been brought,
 We both were blushing aware
 Of but a single thought.

The entrée? Chicken. Sweetheart mine,
 Recall the ardor quick
 With which I hastened to resign
 The choicer bits of chick.
 Less edible the bony things
 With which I had to do,
 But, as I ate those chicken wings,
 My heart flew out to you!

'Twas then I stammered, "Will you, dear?"
 'Twas then you whispered, "Yes."
 What's that? 'Twas when dessert was here?
 Oh, hang it all! I guess
 I know the hour I made secure
 My wedlock fetters hard;
 Madam, I'm absolutely sure
 The "roast" came afterward!

Now, there you go! Indeed, I might
 Have known this little feast
 Would pall upon an appetite
 Substantially increased.
 Waiter, the bill! Don't bring the cheese:
 Dessert makes no appeals.
 Come, Mrs. Smith! I'm through with these
 Reminiscent meals.

A MOCK SUN

By James Huneker

THE grating of the carriage wheels awoke her from the dream which had lightly brushed away the night and the vision of the Arc de Triomphe—looming into the mystery of sky and stars, its monumental flanks sprawling across the Place de l'Etoile. She heard her name called by Mrs. Sheldam as their coachman guided his horses through the gateway of the Princesse de Lancovani's palace.

"Now, Ermentrude! Wake up, dear; we are there," said Mrs. Sheldam in her kind, drawling tones. Mr. Sheldam sighed and threw away the unlighted cigar he had bitten during the ride along the Champs Elysées. Whatever the evening meant for his wife and niece he saw little entertainment in store for himself; he did not speak French very well, he disliked music and "tall talk"; altogether he wished himself at the Grand Hôtel, where he would be sure to meet some jolly Americans. Their carriage had halted in front of a spacious marble stairway, lined on either side with palms, and though it was a June night the glass doors were closed.

Ermentrude's heart was in her throat, not because of the splendor, which she was accustomed to—but it was to be her first meeting with a noble dame, whose name was historic, at whose feet the poets of the Second Empire had prostrated themselves, passionately plucking their lyres; the friend of Liszt, Wagner, Berlioz, of Manet, Degas, Monet; the new school—this wonderful old woman knew them all, from de Goncourt and Flaubert to Daudet and de Maupassant.

Had she not, Ermentrude remembered as she divested herself of her cloak, sent a famous romancer out of the house because he spoke slightly of the Pope! Had she not cut the emperor dead when she saw him with a lady not his empress! What a night this would be in the American girl's orderly existence! And *he* was to be there, he had promised the princess.

Her heart was overflowing when she was graciously received by the great lady who stood in the centre of a group at the back of the drawing-room—a lofty apartment in white and gold, the panels painted by Baudry, the furniture purest Empire. She noted the height and majestic bearing of this cousin of kings, noted the aquiline nose drooped over a contracted mouth—which could assume most winning curves, withal shaded by suspicious down, that echoed in hue her inky eyebrows. The eyes of the princess were small and green and her glance penetrating. Her white hair rolled imperially off her high, narrow forehead.

Ermentrude bore herself with the utmost composure. She adored the Old World, adored genius, but after all she was an Adams of New Hampshire, her sister the wife of a former ambassador. It was more curiosity than *gaucherie* that prompted her to hold the hand offered her and scrutinize the features as if to evoke from the significant, etched wrinkles the tremendous past of this hostess. The princess was pleased.

"Ah, Miss Adams," she said in idiomatic English, "you have candid eyes. You make me feel like telling stories when you gaze at me so appeal-

ingly. Don't be shocked"—the girl had colored—"perhaps I shall, after awhile."

Mr. Sheldam had slipped into a corner behind a very broad table and under the shaded lamps examined some engravings. Mrs. Sheldam talked in hesitating French to the Marquis de Potachre, an old fellow of venerable and burlesque appearance. His fierce little white mustaches were curled ceilingward, but his voice was as timid as honey. He flourished his wizened hand toward Miss Adams.

"Charming! Delightful! She has something English in her *insouciant* pose, and is wholly American in her cerebral quality. And what coloring, what gorgeous brown hair! What a race, madame, is yours!"

Mrs. Sheldam began to explain that the Adams stock was famous, but the marquis did not heed her. He peered at her niece through a gold-rimmed monocle. The princess had left the group near the table and with two young men slowly moved down the salon. Miss Adams was immediately surrounded by some antiquated gentlemen wearing orders, who paid her compliments in the manner of the eighteenth century. She answered them with composure, for she was sure of her French, sure of herself—the princess had not annihilated her. Her aunt, accompanied by the marquis, crossed to her and the old nobleman amused her with his saturnine remarks.

"Time was," he said, "when one met here the cream of Parisian wit and fashion: the great Flaubert, a noisy fellow at times, I vow; Dumas fils, Cabanel, Gérôme, Duran, ever-winning Carolus—ah, what men! Now we get Polish pianists, crazy Belgians, anarchistic poets and neo-impressionists. I have warned the princess again and again."

"Bécasse!" interrupted the lady herself. "M. Rajewski has consented to play a Chopin nocturne. And here are my two painters, Miss Adams—Messieurs Bla and Maugre. They hate each other like the Jesuits and

Jansenists of the good old days of Pascal."

"She likes to display her learning," grumbled the marquis to Mrs. Sheldam. "That younger man, Bla, swears by divided tones; his neighbor, Maugre, paints in dots. One is always to be recognized a half-mile away by his vibrating waterscapes—he calls them Symphonies of the Wet; the other goes in for turkeys in the grass, fowls that are cobalt-blue daubs, with grass a scarlet. It's awful on the optic nerves. *Pointillisme*, Maugre names his stuff. Now, give me Corot—"

"Hush, hush!" came in energetic sibilants from the princess, who rapped with her Japanese walking-stick for silence. Mr. Sheldam woke up and fumbled the pictures as Rajewski, slowly bending his gold-dust aureole until it almost grazed the keyboard, began with deliberate accents a nocturne. Miss Adams knew his playing well, but its poetry was not for her this evening; rather did the veiled tones of the instrument form a misty background to the human tableau. So Chopin must have woven his magic last century, and in a salon like this—the wax candles burning with majestic steadiness in the sculptured sconces, the huge fireplace, monumental in design, with its dull brass garnishing; the subdued richness of the decoration into which fitted, as figures in a frame, the various guests. Even the waxed floor seemed to take on new reverberations as the pianoforte sounded the sweet despair of the Pole. To her dismay Ermentrude caught herself drifting away from the moment's hazy charm to thoughts of her poet. It annoyed her, she sharply reminded herself, that she could not absolutely saturate herself with the music and the manifold souvenirs of the old *hôtel*; perhaps this may have been the spell of Rajewski's playing.

The music ceased. A dry voice whispered in her ear:

"Great artist, that chap Rajewski. Had to leave Russia once because he wouldn't play the Russian national

hymn for the Czar. Bless me, but he was almost sent to Siberia—and in irons, too. Told me here in this very room that he was much frightened. They lighted fires in Poland to honor his patriotism. He acknowledged that he would have played twenty national hymns, but he couldn't remember the Russian one, or never knew it—anyhow, he was christened a patriot, and all by a slip of the memory. Now, that's luck, isn't it?"

She began to dislike this cynical old man with his depreciating tales of genius. She knew that her idols often tottered on clay feet, but she hated to be reminded of that disagreeable reality. She went to M. Rajewski and thanked him prettily in her cool, new voice, and again the princess nodded approval.

"She is *chic*, your little girl," she confided in her deep tones to Mrs. Sheldam, whose tired New England face almost beamed at the compliment.

"We were in Hamburg at the Zoological Garden; I always go to see animals," declaimed the princess in the midst of a thick silence. "For you know, my friends, one studies humanity there in the raw. Well, I dragged our party to the large monkey cage, and we enjoyed ourselves—immensely! And what do you think we saw! A genuine novelty. Some mischievous sailor had given an overgrown ape a mirror, and the poor wretch spent its time staring at its image, neglecting its food and snarling at its companions. The beast would catch the reflection of another ape in the glass and quickly bound to a more remote perch. The keeper told me that for a week his charge had barely eaten. It slept with the mirror held tightly in its paws. Now, what did the mirror mean to the animal! I believe"—here she became very vivacious—"I really believe that it was developing self-consciousness, and in time it would become human. On our way back from Heligoland, where we were entertained on the emperor's yacht at the naval manoeuvres, we paid another visit to our monkey house. The poor, misguided brute had

died of starvation. It had become so vain, so egotistical, so superior that it refused food and wasted away in a corner, gazing at itself, a hairy Narcissus, or rather the perfect type of your modern Superman, who contemplates his *ego* until his brain sickens, and he dies quite mad."

Everyone laughed. Mrs. Sheldam wondered what a Superman was, and Ermentrude felt annoyed. Zarathustra was another of her gods, and this brusquely related anecdote did not seem to her very *spirituelle*. But she had not formulated an answer when she heard a name announced, a name that set her heart beating. At last! The poet had kept his word. She was to meet in the flesh the man whose too few books were her Bibles of art, of philosophy, of all that stood for aspiration toward a lovely ideal in a dull, matter-of-fact world.

"Now," said the princess, as if smiling at some hidden joke, "now you will meet my Superman." And she led the young American girl to Octave Kéroulan and his wife, and, after greeting them in her masculine manner, she burst forth:

"Dear poet! Here is one of your adorers from over-seas! Guard your husband well, Madame Lys."

So he was married! Well, that was not such a shocking fact. Nor was Madame Kéroulan either—a very tall, slim, English-looking blond who dressed modishly and evidently knew that she was the wife of a famous man. Ermentrude found her insipid; she had studied her face first before comparing the mental photograph of the poet with the original. Nor did she feel, with unconscious sex rivalry, any sense of inferiority to the wife of her admired one. He was nearly forty, but he looked older; gray hairs tinged his finely modeled head. His face was shaven, and with the bulging brow and full jaw he was more of the German or Belgian than French. Black hair thrown off his broad forehead accented this resemblance; a composer rather than a prose-poet and dramatist, was the rapid verdict of Ermentrude. She was

not disappointed, though she had expected a more fragile type. The weaver of moonshine, of mystic phrases, of sweet gestures and veiled sonorities should not have worn the guise of one who ate three meals a day and slept soundly after his mellow incantations. Yet she was not—inheriting, as she did, a modicum of sense from her father—disappointed.

The conversation did not move more briskly with the entrance of the Kéroulans. The marquis sullenly gossiped with Mr. Sheldam; the princess withdrew herself to the far end of the room with her two painters. Rajewski was going to a *soirée*, he informed them, where he would play before a new picture by Carrière, as it was slowly undraped; no one less in rank than a duchess would be present! A little stiffly, Ermentrude Adams assured the Kéroulans of her pleasure in meeting them. The poet took it as a matter of course, simply, without a suspicion of posed grandeur. Ermentrude saw this with satisfaction. If he had clay feet—and he must have them; all men do—at least he wore his genius with a sense of its responsibility. She meekly folded her hands and leaned back, awaiting the precious moment when the oracle would speak, when this modern magician of art would display his cunning. But he was fatuously commonplace in his remarks.

"I have often told Madame Kéroulan that my successes in Europe do not appeal to me as those in far-away America. Dear America—how it must enjoy a breath of real literature!"

Mrs. Sheldam sat up primly and Ermentrude was vastly amused. With a flash of fun she replied:

"Yes, America does, M. Kéroulan. We have so many Europeans over there now that our standard has fallen off from the days of Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier and Whitman. And didn't America give Europe Poe?" She knew that this boast had the ring of the amateur, but it pleased her to see how it startled him.

"America is the Great Bribe," he

pursued. "You have no artists in New York."

"Nor have we New Yorkers," the girl retorted. "The original writing natives live in Europe."

He looked puzzled, but did not stop. "You have depressed literature to the point of publication," he solemnly asserted. This was too much and she laughed in mockery. Husband and wife joined her, while Mrs. Sheldam trembled at the audacity of her niece—whose irony was as much lost on her as it was on the poet.

"But *you* publish plays and books, do you not?" Ermentrude naively asked.

Madame Kéroulan interposed in icy tones:

"Mademoiselle Adams misunderstands. Monsieur Kéroulan is the Grand Disdainer. Like his bosom friend, M. Mallarmé, he cares little for the philistine public—"

He interrupted her: "Lys, dear friend, you must not bore Miss Adams with my theories of art and life. She has read me—"

Ermentrude gave him a grateful glance. He seemed, despite his self-consciousness, a great man—how great she could not exactly define. His eyes—two black diamonds full of golden reflections, the eyes of a conqueror, a seer—began to burn little bright spots into her consciousness, and, selfishly, she admitted, she wished the two women would go away and leave her to interrogate her idol in peace. There were so many things to ask him, so many difficult passages in "The Golden Glaze" and "Hesitations," above all in that great dramatic poem, "The Voices," which she had witnessed in Paris, with its mystic atmosphere of pity and terror. She would never forget her complex feelings as, at a Paris theatre, she saw slowly file before her in a Dream-Masque the wraith-like figures of the poet, their voices their only corporeal gift. Picture had dissolved into picture, and in the vapors of these crooning enchantments she heard voices of various timbres enunciating in monosyllables the wis-

dom of the ages, the poetry of the future. This play was, for her and for Paris, too, the last word in dramatic art, the supreme *nuance* of beauty. Everything had been accomplished: Shakespeare, Molière, Ibsen, Sardou; yet here was a new evocation, a fresh peep at untrodden paths. In bliss that almost dissolved her being the emotional American girl reached her hotel, where she tried to sleep. When her aunt told her of the invitation tendered by the princess, a rare one socially, she was in the ninth heaven of the Swedenborgians. Any place to meet Octave Kéroulan!

And now he sat near her, signaling, she knew, her sympathies, and as the fates would have it two dragons, her aunt and his wife, guarded the gateway to the precious garden of his imagination. She could have cried aloud her chagrin. Such an inestimable treasure was genius that to see it under lock and key invited indignation. The time was running on and her great man had said nothing. He could, if he wished, give her a million extraordinary glimpses of the earth and the air and the waters below them, for his eyes were mirrors of his marvelous and many-colored soul; but what chance had he with a conjugal iceberg on one side, a cloud of smoke—poor Aunt Sheldam—on the other! She felt in her fine, rhapsodic way like a young priestess before the altar, ready to touch with a live coal the lips of the gods, but withheld by a malignant power. For the first time in her life Ermentrude Adams, delicately nurtured in a social hothouse, realized in wrath the major tyranny of caste.

The evening wore away. Mrs. Sheldam aroused her husband as she cast a horrified glance at the classic prints he had been studying. The princess dismissed her two impressionists and came over to the poet. She, too plainly, did not care for his wife, and as the party broke up there was a sense of relief, though Ermentrude could not conceal her dissatisfaction. Her joy was sincere when Madame Kéroulan asked Miss Adams and her

aunt to call. It was slightly gelid, the invitation, though accepted immediately by Ermentrude. This time the *convenances* could look out for themselves; she would not go back to America without an interview. The princess raised her hand mockingly.

"What, I go to one of your conferences! Not I, *cher potté*. Keep your mysteries for your youthful disciples." She looked at Ermentrude, who did not lower her eyes—she was triumphant now. Perhaps *he* might say something before they parted. He did not, but the princess did.

"Beware, young America, of my Superman! You remember the story of the ape with the mirror!"

Ermentrude flushed with mortification. This princess was decidedly rude at times. But she kept her temper and thanked the lady for a unique evening. Her exquisite youth and grace pleased the terrible old woman, who then varied her warning.

"Beware," she called out in comical accents as they slowly descended the naked marble staircase, "of the Sleeping Princess!"

The American girl looked over her shoulder. "I don't think your Superman has a mirror at all."

"Yes, but his princess holds one for him!" was the jesting reply.

The carriage door slammed. They rolled homeward, and Ermentrude suffered from a desperate sense of the unachieved. The princess had been impertinent, the Kéroulans rather banal. Mrs. Sheldam watched her charge's face in the intermittent lights of the rue de Rivoli.

"I think your poet a bore," she essayed. Then she shook her husband—they had reached their hotel.

II

It was the garden of a poet, she declared, as, with the Kéroulans and her aunt, Ermentrude sat and slowly fanned herself, watching the Bois de Boulogne, which foamed like a cascade of green opposite this pretty little house

in Neuilly. The day was warm and the drive, despite the shaded, watered avenues, a dusty, fatiguing one. Mrs. Sheldam had, doubtfully, it is true, suggested the bourgeois comfort of the Métropolitain, but she was frowned on by her enthusiastic niece. What! ride underground in such weather? So they arrived at the poet's not in the best of humor, for Mrs. Sheldam had quietly chidden her charge on the score of her "flightiness." These foreign celebrities were well enough in their way, but—! And now Ermentrude, instead of looking Octave Kéroulan in the face, preferred the vista of the pale blue sky, awash with a scattered, fleecy white cloud, the rolling edges of which echoed the dazzling sunshine. The garden was not large, its few trees were of ample girth and their shadows most satisfying to eyes weary of the city's bright, hard surfaces. There were no sentimental plaster casts to disturb the soft harmonies of this walled-in retreat, and if Ermentrude preferred to regard with obstinacy unusual in her mobile temperament the picture of Paris below them, it was because she felt that Kéroulan was literally staring at her.

A few moments after their arrival and with the advent of tea, he had accomplished what she had fervently wished for the night she had met him—he succeeded, by several easy moves, in isolating her from her aunt, and, notwithstanding her admiration, her desire to tap with her knuckles the metal of her idol and listen for a ring of hollowness, she was alarmed. Yet, perversely, she knew that he would not exhibit his paces before his wife—naturally a disinterested spectator—or before her aunt, who was hardly "intimate" enough. The long desired hour found her disquieted. She did not have many moments to analyze these mixed emotions, for he spoke, and his voice was agreeably modulated.

"You, indeed, honor the poor poet's abode with your youth and your responsive soul, Miss Adams. I thank you, though my gratitude will seem as poor as my hospitality." She looked

at him now, a little fluttered. "You bring to me across seas the homage of a fresh nation, a fresh nature." She beat a mental retreat at these calm, confident phrases; what could he know of her homage? "And if Amiel has said, '*Un paysage est un état de l'âme*,' I may amend it by calling my soul a state of landscape, since it has been visited by your image." This was more reassuring, if exuberant.

"Man is mere inert matter when born, but his soul is his own work. Hence, I assert: the Creator of man is—man." Now she felt at ease. This wisdom, hewn from the vast quarry of his genius, she had encountered before in his "Golden Glaze," that book which had built temples of worship in America wherein men and women sought and found the pabulum for living beautifully. He was "talking" his book. Why not? It was certainly delightful plagiarism!

"You know, dear young lady," he continued, and his eyes, with their contracting and expanding disks, held her attention like a steady flame, "do you know that my plays, my books are but the drama of my conscience exteriorized? Out of the reservoirs of my soul I draw my inspiration. I have an esthetic horror of evidence; like Renan, I loathe the deadly heresy of affirmation; I have the certitude of doubt, for are we poets not the lovers of the truth decorated? When I built my lordly palace of art it was not with the ugly durability of marble. No; like the Mohammedan who constructed his mosque and mingled with the cement sweet-smelling musk, so I dreamed my mosque into existence with music wedded to philosophy. Music and philosophy are the twin edges of my sword. Ah! you smile and ask: Where is Woman in this sanctuary? She is not barred, I assure you. My music—is Woman. Beauty is a promise of happiness, Stendahl says. I go further: Life—the woman one has; Art—the woman one loves!"

She was startled. Her aunt and Madame Kéroulan had retired to the end of the garden and only a big

bee, humming overhead, was near. He had arisen with the pontifical air of a man who had a weighty gospel to expound. He encircled with his potent personality the imagination of his listener; the hypnotic quality of his written word was carried leagues further in effect by his trained, soothing voice. Flattered, no longer frightened, her nerves deliciously assaulted by this colored rhetoric, Ermentrude yielded her intellectual assent. She did not comprehend. She felt only the rhythms of his speech, as sound swallowed sense. He held her captive with a pause and his eloquent eyes—they were of an extraordinary luster—completed the subjugation of her will.

"Only kissed hands are white," he murmured, and suddenly she felt a velvety kiss on her left hand. Ermentrude did not pretend to follow the words of her aunt and Madame Kéroulan as they stooped before a bed of June roses. Nor did she remember how she reached the pair. The one vivid reality of her life was the cruel act of her idol. She was not conscious of blushing, nor did she feel that she had grown pale. His wife treated her with impartial indifference, at times a smile crossing her face, with its implication—to Ermentrude—of selfish reserves. But this hateful smile cut her to the soul—one more prisoner at his chariot wheels, it proclaimed! Kéroulan was as unconcerned as if he had written a poetic line. He had expected more of an outburst, more of a rebuff; the absolute snapping of the web he had spun surprised him. His choicest music had been spread for the eternal banquet, but the invited one tarried. Very well! If not today, tomorrow! He repeated a verse of Verlaine, and with his wife dutifully at his side bowed to the two Americans and told them of the pleasure experienced. Ermentrude, her candid eyes now reproachful and suspicious, did not flinch as she took his hand—it seemed to melt in hers—but her farewell was conventional. In the street, before they

seated themselves in their carriage Mrs. Sheldam shook her head.

"Oh, my dear! What a woman! What a man! I have *such* a story to tell you. No wonder you admire these people. The wife is a genius—isn't she handsome?—but the man—he is an angel!"

"I didn't see his wings in the garden, auntie," was the curt reply.

III

THE Sheldams always stayed at the same hotel during their annual visits to Paris. It was an old-fashioned house with an entrance in the rue Saint-Honoré and another in the rue de Rivoli. The girl sat on a small balcony from which she could view the Tuileries Gardens without turning her head, while looking farther westward she saw the Place de la Concorde, its windy spaces a chessboard for rapid vehicles, whose wheels, wet from the watered streets, ground out silvery fire in the sun-rays of this gay June afternoon. Where the avenue des Champs Elysées began, a powdery haze enveloped the equipages overblown with their summer toilets, all speeding to Longchamps. It was a racing day and Ermentrude, feigning a headache, had insisted that her uncle and aunt go to the meeting. It would amuse them, she knew, and she wished to be alone. Nearly a week had passed since the visit to Neuilly, and she had been afraid to ask her aunt what Madame Kéroulan had imparted to her—afraid and also too proud. Her sensibility had been grievously wounded by the plainly expressed feelings of Octave Kéroulan. She had reviewed without prejudice his behavior, and she could not set down to mere Latin gallantry either his words or his action. No, there was too much intensity in both—ah, how she rebelled at the brutal disillusionment!—and there were, she argued, method and sequence in his approach and attack. If she had been the average coquetting creature the offense might

not have been so mortal. But, so she told herself again and again—as if to frighten away lurking darker thoughts, ready to spring out and devour her good resolutions—she had worshiped her idol with reservations. His poetry, his philosophy, were so inextricably blended that they smote her nerves like the impact of some bright perfume, some sharp chord of modern music. Dangerously she had filed at her emotions in the service of culture and was now paying the penalty for her ardent confidence. His ideas, vocal with golden meanings, were never meant to be translated into the vernacular of life, never to be transposed from higher to lower levels; this base betrayal of his ideals she felt Kéroulan had committed. Had he not said that love should be like "*un baiser sur un miroir*"? Was he, after all, what the princess had called him? And was he only a mock sun swimming in a firmament of glories which he could have outshone?

A servant knocked, and not receiving a response, entered with a letter. The superscription was strange. She opened and read:

DEAR AND TENDER CHILD: I know you were angry with me when we parted. I am awaiting here below your answer to come to you and bare my heart. Say yes!

"Is the gentleman downstairs?" she asked. The servant bowed. The blood in her head buzzing, she nodded, and the man disappeared. Standing there in the bright summer light, Ermentrude Adams saw her face in the oval glass above the fireplace, saw its pallor, the strained expression of the eyes, and like a drowning person she made a swift inventory of her life and, with the insane hope of one about to be swallowed up by the waters, she grasped at a solitary straw. Let him come; she would have an explanation from him! The torture of doubt might then be brought to an end. . . .

Someone glided into the apartment. Turning quickly Ermentrude recognized Madame Kéroulan. Before she could orient herself that lady took her by both hands and, uttering apologetic

words, forced the amazed girl into a chair.

"Don't be frightened, dear young lady. I am not here to judge, but to explain. Yes, I knew my husband loves you. But do not believe in him. He is a *terrific* man." This word she emphasized as if doubtful of its meaning. "Ah, if you but knew the inferno of my existence! There are so many like you—stop, do not leave! You are not to blame. I, Lillias Kéroulan, do not censure your action. My husband is an evil man and a charlatan. Hear me out! He has only the gift of words. He steals all his profundities of art from dead philosophers. He is not a genuine poet. He is not a dramatist. I swear to you that he is now the butt of artistic Paris. The Princesse de Lancovani made him—she is another of his sort. He was the mode; now he is desperate because his day has passed. He knows you are rich. He desires your money, not *you*. I discovered that he was coming here this day. Oh, I am cleverer than he. I followed. Here I am to save you from him—and from yourself—he is not now below in the salon."

"Please go away!" indignantly answered Ermentrude. She was furious at this horrible, plain-spoken, jealous creature. Save her from herself—as if ever she had wavered! The disinterested adoration she had entertained for the great artist—what a hideous ending was this! The tall, blond woman with the narrow, light blue eyes watched the girl. How could anyone call her handsome, Ermentrude wondered. Then her visitor noticed the crumpled letter on the table. With a gesture of triumph she secured it and smiling her superior smile she left, closing the door softly behind her.

Only kissed hands are white! Ermentrude threw herself on the couch, her cheeks burning, her heart tugging in her bosom like a ship impatient at its anchorage. And was this the sordid end of a beautiful dream? . . .

"Do you know, dearest, we have had such news!" exclaimed Mrs. Sheldam

as she entered, and so charged with her happiness that she did not notice the drawn features of her niece. "Charlie, Charlie will be here some time next week. He arrives at Havre. He has just cabled his father. Let us go down to meet the boy." Charlie was the only son of the Sheldams and fonder of his cousin than she dare tell herself. She burst into tears, which greatly pleased her aunt.

In the train, eight days later, Ermentrude sat speechless in company with her aunt and uncle. But as the train approached Havre she remembered something.

"Aunt Clara," she bravely asked, "do you recall the afternoon we spent at the Kéroulans? What did Madame Kéroulan tell you then? Is it a secret?" She held tightly clenched in her hand the arm-rest at the side of the compartment.

"Oh, dear, no! The madame was very chatty, very communicative. It's funny I've not told you before. She confessed that she was the happiest woman on earth; not only was she married to a grand genius—for the life of me I can't see where *that* comes in!—but he was a good man in the bargain. It appears that his life is made weary by women who pester him with their attentions. Even our princess—yes, *the* princess; isn't it shocking?—was a perfect nuisance until Mr. Kéroulan assured her that, though he owed much of his success in the world to her, yet he would never betray the trust reposed in him by his wife. What's the mat-

ter, dear, does the motion of the car affect you? It *does* rock! And *he* shows her all the letters he gets from silly women admirers—oh, these foreign women and their queer ways! And he tells her the way they make up to him when he meets them in society."

Ermentrude shivered. The princess also! And with all her warning about the Superman! Now she understood! Then she took the hand of Mrs. Sheldam, and, stroking it, whispered:

"Auntie, I'm so glad I am going to Havre, going to see Charlie soon." The lids of her eyes were wet. Mrs. Sheldam had never been so motherly.

"You *are* a darling!" she answered as she squeezed Ermentrude's arm. "But there is someone who doesn't seem to care much for Havre." She pointed out Mr. Sheldam, who, oblivious of picturesque Normandy through which the train was speeding, slept serenely. Ermentrude envied him his repose. He had never stared into the maddening mirror which turned poets into Supermen and—sometimes monsters. Had she herself not gazed into this distorting glass? The tune of her life had never sounded so discouragingly faint and inutile. Perhaps she did not possess the higher qualities that could extort from a nature so rich and various as Octave Kéroulan's its noblest music! Perhaps his wife had told the truth to Mrs. Sheldam and had lied to her! And then, through a merciful mist of tears, Ermentrude saw Havre, saw her future.



KEPT HIM POOR

MRS. DORCAS—A woman who can't reform a man before marriage can't do it afterward.

MRS. SPENDALL—Oh, yes, she can. Now, for instance, my husband used to have expensive tastes.

A DISTANT SPRING

I WHO love the spring so well
 Shall be sleeping some glad day
 When her hosts come back to dwell
 In their old, familiar way.

I shall live, alas! no more
 In some distant April hour
 When the spring flings wide her door,
 Calling leaf and bloom and flower.

I shall sleep—but I shall dream
 In my home beneath the ground,
 And my slumbering heart shall teem
 With its visions deep, profound.

I shall know, ere you will guess
 (Though with life I have no part),
 What new golden loveliness
 Stirs within the old earth's heart.

I shall hear the first soft sound
 When the spring is born anew,
 And rejoice, beneath the ground,
 At the bliss to come to you.

And the dreams that I shall dream
 In that spring when I am dead,
 May arise until they seem
 Blossoms white or blossoms red!

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE.



KITCHEN CHAT

THE COOK—I think stories of high life are so interesting.
 THE MAID—Yes, but the best ones are not fit to print.



HE DIDN'T SUIT

DEALER—This bird doesn't swear.
 CUSTOMER—Then I won't take him; I want a good, healthy parrot.

THE TWO O'LEANS

By Grace MacGowan Cooke

"IT is a strange thing," I said testily to Burchard, "that the band always plays in the other square."

We had gone out on the fire-escape skirting our windows, to listen to a passing street band. Ours is an old-fashioned importing house down toward the Battery, Van Syke Brothers, with a heavy China and India trade, and more old barnacles like Burchard and myself upon the commercial ship than most houses in the business. We lingered a moment, looking after the retreating band, which, to justify my words, burst into a flare of music as it passed the next crossing.

"Yes," agreed Burchard whimsically; "it plays in the square before and the square after for old fellows like you and me; but did you ever think how glorious it must be to be the man who lives in the square where the band always plays?"

"There is no such person," I returned shortly as I went back to my desk.

"Oh, yes, there is." Burchard took up the theme. "There's Tom O'Lean—you'll never deny, Shippington, that the band plays in any square where Tom dwells. Why, if there is a good side to a woman's face, it is always the side turned toward O'Lean—the other man gets the wart on her cheek or the unfortunate twist to her smile."

O'Lean was that absurd composite, a Scotch-Irishman. I always told him that name of his was O'Lynn, and that he was a lineal descendant of Brian O'Lynn—just a wild Irishman—and the "Scotch" a mere rhetorical flourish.

But Burchard had Tom down finer. It was Burchard's conceit that a wild Irishman did inhabit the *peristilium* of O'Lean's being and lounge very obviously in the vestibule. But once penetrate the *æcus*, get into the heart of the house, and you met the hard-headed—yea, and the hard-hearted—canny Scot.

This description, if fanciful, was true. The son of old Thomas O'Lean, who really made Van Syke Brothers what it is, O'Lean himself came into the business in '95. The house was rather on the downhill then—I mentioned the barnacles, and they may have had their weight in retarding progress. Tom O'Lean took the entire Eastern business and breathed into it the breath of vigorous life; he made it, in short, the most extensive in New York.

To follow out Burchard's distinction in the matter, it was the Irishman in O'Lean, and the Irishman only, who was known in society, where he was a huge favorite. He responded hilariously to every light call. The senses were his. He was a harp to music; a well of tears and laughter; a hot-headed, ill-considering fellow, instant in quarrel, struck by the droll or the ludicrous while it was occurring. And generous, too; he would give away the coat off O'Lean's back, would the Irishman; but if there were time, that the Scotchman in the inner chambers got in his word, the coat might be replevined and a bill for hire sent in.

The Irishman in O'Lean could never have made a living; he would have quarreled with half his customers, and given all he possessed to the other half

—and the Irishman was O'Lean himself where he came in personal contact with people.

Then, since he inhabited the vestibule, met the crowd and answered when O'Lean was spoken to, one would have said that Tom must be a poor business man. Nay, but it was the Scotchman, surely, who took full charge of the Oriental end of that enormous foreign traffic. A tremendously wearing position it was, calling for dogged patience, endless hard work, acumen and diplomacy beyond the resources of most seasoned business men, and O'Lean was a young fellow. Talk to him of business, face to face, and he could propose more visionary plans in a half-hour than even himself could attempt to carry into practice in a week. But put a pen in his hand, give him no one but his stenographer to speak to, his half-dozen clerks to captain, and, most needful of all, approach him by letter and from long range—as far off as China, say—and he was the soul of discretion.

Old man Van Syke, head of the firm, used to say that it was O'Lean's sober second thought that saved him. I was more inclined to agree with Burchard: O'Lean had none but sober thoughts, first or second, for matters which approached him through the mails—by routes strictly unemotional.

He had not been a year in the house before he was engaged to Minna Van Syke, granddaughter of the head of the firm and orphan child of one of its richest members. "I told you," Burchard said when it was announced, "that the band always played in O'Lean's square." And he asserted, in his usual fanciful fashion, that Minna Van Syke was engaged to the Irishman in O'Lean, and would never really know the other. As pretty as a picture, with three millions in her own right, the merriest, gayest little butterfly that ever lived her life out dancing on her toes from one joy to another, how should she see any side of her lover's character except that which was ravished and delighted with all her charms?

"Courtship's a social matter; that's

the Irishman's part," said Burchard, shaking his head dolefully. "But matrimony is business; and the woman who marries Tom O'Lean will find the Scotchman in his character fast enough."

"Tom loves the girl—" I began.

"Does he?" Burchard interrupted. "I doubt it—I doubt it, Shippington. That side of him which never thinks is content with her—dazzled by her, indeed. But I tell you, old man, on the day Tom O'Lean sits down and contemplates that child calmly—weighs her—she'll be no more to him than a painted card—and the Scotchman's decisions are final, mind you."

This was what made it a tragedy when O'Lean's hearing began to fail. It would set a man to thinking how each of us—the real ego—is slave, creature, creation of that physical machine which we drive, and which we could stop at pleasure; which we may shamefully neglect and injure, or carefully preserve and care for. The body is, after all, a colored glass through which the soul looks. The world must be of that tint which the glass throws upon it; and, conversely, the ego, the soul, must appear to outsiders of that tint which the body throws back upon it. A man addresses his audience, the world, through his body; and this body makes strange and subtle limitations to his expression. When a bearing is broken in the machine, or a connection destroyed, it may mean disaster to the soul, or it might even mean the conferring of a boon. And when random chance removes this disability, frees a cog of the mechanism, it may be doing the soul a cruel service.

After all, just what each of us wants is not the most perfect mechanism, but the machine which will best express the soul within.

When O'Lean's deafness first began to grow upon him, his engagement to Minna Van Syke, his recent membership in the firm, made his future look as secure before him as a human future well could look. But of the foundations of this future, half had been built by the

Scotchman and half by the Irishman, and it wanted both to carry the structure to successful completion.

It was by no means all at once that we saw or felt the eclipse of the Irishman. O'Lean would still occasionally engineer a night out with the boys, even after his infirmity became noticeable and annoying. I have seen him "sit in" at a stiff game of poker when the bluffs of his opponents had to be repeated to him in yells; and he himself would laugh over the incongruity of his amusements and his old-gentleman-like weakness.

But these times grew fewer; the Irishman was no longer at the door or window to hear and respond to your hail; all communication went under the Scot's considering eye; and one day came the break in his love-affairs which I felt afterward I had been expecting from the day I first knew Tom's hearing was going.

Minna Van Syke was at the office; she had arranged for a yachting party in what was to O'Lean the busiest season of the year.

"You must excuse me, my dear," I heard him say. "It will be impossible for me to leave New York this week."

"And yet you claim that you are fond of yachting!" pouted Minna. The words sounded quite like a challenge, after hearing them repeated three times and in keys of increasing shrillness.

"Oh—yachting? So I am," O'Lean agreed quietly. "I am taking some people from our Yokohama branch out in the yacht this week; that is why I cannot go with you." And he regarded her with a grave smile.

The yacht belonged in a manner to the house. If O'Lean used it that week, Miss Van Syke could not.

"Tom!" she cried, "did you not hear me when I said that I had invited the Beekmans and Tommy Degraffenreid and the Ottway girls to a yachting party for next week? Oh—you never hear anything!"

And with flushed cheeks, eyes over-bright, and hands that trembled al-

most laughably, she searched upon the desk for pencil and paper.

While Tom sat absorbed in a letter from Bangkok, his fiancée wrote furiously for five minutes, threw her communication down before him and swept out of the office.

We all supposed—you will be observing by this time that the business office was full of old-time employees, and very much like a large family—we all supposed, then, that this note was the breaking of Minna Van Syke's engagement to O'Lean. Whether it was or not, the engagement was broken about this time.

The new O'Lean—one could call him nothing else, so changed was he—went phlegmatically about his duties, was the very backbone of the house and appeared to take a fatherly interest in the matter when, a year after, Miss Minna married, very suddenly, a young Southerner whom she had met at Old Point.

O'Lean's handsome, sunny face grew to wear that withdrawn expression which belongs to the deaf and which is almost equivalent to old age in its alteration of any countenance. He had dropped so completely out of the ranks of ladies' men that it came—to me, at least—with a shock of surprise when I heard the news of his engagement to a cousin of his late fiancée.

Florence Allston was a Van Syke also; her mother had been Katharine Van Syke, the old man's niece; so Tom did not go outside the firm. No doubt he had been thrown much in the young lady's society since the breaking of his engagement to Minna. Florence was a woman in every way fitted to please the present Tom O'Lean—or Thomas O'Lean, as people were getting to call him. Handsome in her grave, dark way, witty, too, and brilliant when she chose to talk, she was in general rather a silent person, with an alarming number of letters which she might have worn after her name had she chosen, since she had gathered them by years of toil at one of the foreign universities which are open to women. Never so much a society woman as her Van

Syke cousins, she was yet a prized member of a very charming circle.

I may as well admit here and now—we shall get on more easily, I see, if I do so—that I am extravagantly fond of Tom O'Lean. In fact, lonely old fellow that I am, I love him like a son. And I grew to love Florence Allston, too, during her brief engagement to my boy. Her father was for the most part in China and the East Indies, and I artfully suggested that I be accepted as temporary understudy to him, maintaining my position only during good behavior. I was laughingly accepted, and the intimacy which grew up between us emboldened me to remonstrate when I heard that the pair were going abroad on their wedding tour, intending to have an operation performed in Munich which, it was hoped, would restore Tom's hearing.

"Why not have this done before you are married?" I queried cautiously. "Surely there are surgeons as skilful in New York as in Germany."

"I think so, too, Mr. Shippington, but"—Florence paused and looked at me—"you know it is possible that the operation will not be successful; and we are told that if it is not Tom will lose his hearing entirely."

"Well?" I prompted.

"Well," she smiled gently, "you know what Tom is. You know that if he found himself stone deaf and without the prospect of recovering his hearing, it would be just like him to develop honorable scruples. Now," laying a slim white hand upon my arm, and looking at me with two dark eyes which were surely lamps of love that might have led a man anywhere, "I am not afraid—nor ashamed—to tell you, Mr. Shippington, that I want Tom, and I'm willing to take him with any infirmity that may be sent upon him. So, as the case is not considered promising, I urge that the operation be after we are married."

"Yes," I said to myself, "she will take Tom O'Lean with all his infirmities fast enough—the Tom O'Lean she knows. But how will she like him without them? How will the wild

Irishman—long since deceased, whom she probably never knew—strike her sedate maiden fancy?"

The O'Leans were abroad for a year. I heard, in the early part of their stay, that the operation had been successfully performed. I met them first at a garden party given for the benefit of the St. Something's Orphanage at Van Syke's place up on the Hudson. Tom was coming back into the office the next week. He looked ten years younger than when I had last seen him. That patient, half-wearied look was erased from his countenance. In short, he was the old sparkling Tom O'Lean—delight of the wilder young people of his circle, terror of the staid elders, who felt their authority slipping when Tom led the revolt.

He was gabbling to such an extent that I fancied he must have had too much wine. He was surging about the place with two girls, one on each arm, little laughing chits of school-girls who were screaming with delight over his witticisms; and later, he auctioned off some fancy articles in his own inimitable style. The hits he made were witty—but daringly personal.

I glanced at Mrs. O'Lean's high-bred, handsome face; it was flushed, and her eyes sparkled—I apprehended the worst. There she sat, in statuesque beauty, her draperies drawn about her, the white parasol over her shoulder making a background for her graceful dark head. O'Lean jested and gibed, took the word and made his wit play upon it in many colors—some of them rather equivocal. The crowd went wild over him, as they always did; but I noticed that Florence was not laughing.

True, she was a rather grave sort of person, yet my foreboding heart read dissatisfaction in her bearing, from the tip of the aigrette in her dark braids to the toe of her dainty kid slipper.

The thing followed me home and haunted me. Tom and I had occupied rooms in the same apartment house before his marriage; I missed him

painfully. I wanted to go and tell Florence what a good heart my boy had; how the virtues the Irish O'Lean promised were borne out well by the Scotchman, when you came to know him intimately—I wanted to pour out all this to her who had been his wife nearly a year!

Yes, yes, I see—you have identified me. I am that party who "would interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying"! So a week later I set out for the handsome house in Seventy-first street, determined to have the matter settled and to do what I could toward making peace.

I found no one at home but Florence, and the long twilight talk we had together was my opportunity. Yet the blessed girl had such a wonderful reserve and dignity about her that I had barely touched the edge of my subject when Tom came into the quiet rooms.

He was in his noisiest and least reasonable humor, and my heart sank when Florence, pouring his tea for him, repeated my version of Burchard's remarks about the Irishman and Scotchman. For an instant, as I looked at her, I was willing to say that such tactlessness ought to cost her Tom O'Lean; and I wondered why good women were always stupid.

"Oh, yes," agreed Tom easily, "that's Burchard's wisdom. And Shipington believes in it; according to him you are a bigamist, Florence; you've married an Irishman, and a Scotchman, too."

"Not quite that," I interrupted testily. "I was trying to explain to Florence that she'd married a Scotchman—a decent body who knew how to behave himself, even if he was rather dull—and that when that German surgeon made you a present of your hearing once more, she got a chance to see, for the first time, the wild Irishman, who is liable to shock and astonish her."

"Do you think so?" asked Florence O'Lean's low, commanding voice. "I may as well make a confession, then."

Her face flushed, she glanced to-

ward her husband; she looked exactly as she had a week ago at the auction. I dreaded what must follow.

"The first time I saw Tom—do you remember when it was, dear?" and she put out a slim, white hand to her husband.

He shook his head, as he took possession of the fingers, and pressed them softly.

"It was long before his engagement to Minna was broken," she said softly, speaking to me, but looking for the most part at him. "And he has been just Tom O'Lean to me ever since then, the man I loved, whether he was very deaf and it gave him an odd, diffident manner, or whether he was, as on that first day, a little tipsy and inclined to be quarrelsome."

I leaned back in my chair and agreed with numerous philosophers who are dead, a cloud of them who are living, and some others who are yet to be born, that the ways of women are past finding out—that no man may read the heart feminine. "A trifle tipsy," I murmured weakly, at last.

"He's been looking to hear of a divorce in the O'Lean family!" O'Lean shouted, laughing. "He came here as a peacemaker this day!" And looking at my red face he roared again.

Tom's wife turned her dark eyes upon me with a smile that was kinder than most women's spoken assurances.

"You know whether I love you two children or not," I protested. "I couldn't help worrying."

"Worry no more," flourished Tom, as he stepped into the dining-room to compound a recondite punch the like of which is not to be sipped elsewhere.

Florence laughed. Then she leaned close, and spoke in a low, soft voice:

"You will forget it if I trust you so entirely as to tell you something I have never hinted to any creature living?" she queried.

I nodded and laid my hand on hers.

"I loved Tom from that first moment," the soft voice said. "He was engaged to Minna, and, of course, it

was my part to think as little about him as I could. But when he was free, when she threw him over, I set myself as deliberately to win him—to court him, if you like that word better—as ever a woman did.”

“And you won him,” I added, remembering the adoration in which volatile, irresponsible, irrepressible Tom seemed to hold this quiet, well-balanced wife of his.

“I won him,” she agreed, “just as I love him—the whole man—Scotchman—Irishman—all. There is no possibility in Tom’s nature which I do not love; and”—the slim hand beneath my own turned itself over and grasped my fingers in sudden emphasis—and I believe there is no possibility in his nature that cannot love me.”

I was like a man who walks into a room and presses the button which lights it. Everything suddenly looked different to me, illuminated and glorified by this unexpected bit of truth. Here had I been, like many an over-anxious parent, confronting a painful figment of my fears and fancies about

these two young people whom I loved. And it seems that in fact this was one of the matches which are made in heaven. The Irishman certainly needs Florence, with her big balance wheel of patient common sense, much more than the canny, deaf Scotchman did. And to think that she is that hundredth woman who can see it all, know it all and love him the better!

And then came Tom with the punch.

“She loves him all,” he said gently, handing me my glass, laying a light touch on his wife’s head, “just as all of him loves her—Scotchman or Irishman. You and Burchard are gay old philosophers; but in fact there’s nothing like matrimony to centralize a man, to unify him, as it were. Perhaps Florence sees the real O’Lean through those other fellows.”

We clinked our little glasses together; then I lifted mine and, smiling upon my boy and my girl, gave a toast, and we all laughed over it.

“Tom O’Lean,” I said, “both of him! In fine, long life to the two O’Leans!”



TRIOLET TO INNOCENZA

(ACCOMPANYING A PAIR OF GLOVES)

TEN perfect little Loves—
 (I kiss each dainty finger!)
 Shall fill these lucky gloves—
 Ten perfect little Loves!
 Who’d dream a flock of doves
 In *such* dark nests would linger!
 Ten perfect little Loves
 I kiss—*each* dainty finger!

RICHARD BUTLER GLAENZER.



HE WAS NOT WELL POSTED

HAROLD—May I kiss your hand?

GERTRUDE—You should have higher aspirations.

JONQUILS

By Mark Lee Luther

"TEMPERATURE normal, pulse like a clock." The surgeon briskly pocketed his watch. "My dear Miss Marbury, you're as well as nurse there, or myself."

His patient showed no elation at the announcement.

"But I don't feel so very fit, Dr. West," she protested. "Besides, I've heard that for months after appendicitis one——"

"One hears great nonsense," he interrupted bluntly. "Get more oxygen, Miss Marbury." His keen glance ranged the costly refinement of her surroundings. "Get into the open air, bodily and mentally."

The lady watched him in frank admiration as he dropped his crisp staccato sentences. He was something new under her sun. Appendicitis, plus Dr. West, had freshened existence; and now, as the great surgeon's part in the new dispensation seemed at an end, she felt that to prolong the novelty she would even welcome a mild relapse. When the nurse withdrew upon an errand of West's, Miss Marbury turned to him impulsively.

"If my mind is ill, prescribe for it," she invited. "I put myself in your hands."

"That is scarcely in my line," he rejoined drily. "I'm neither parson nor alienist."

"As a personal favor, then. What do you recommend?"

West's glance again inventoried Miss Marbury's immediate household goods.

"That yellow sunset there," he said, with an abrupt nod toward a painting; "an Inness, isn't it?"

"Yes," she assented wonderingly;

"one of his early things. It's painted a trifle hard for Inness, don't you think?"

The surgeon left her query unanswered.

"Its neighbor is a Meissonier?" he hazarded.

"You mean the drowsy cardinal above the cabinet? No; a Vibert—his best period."

"And the cabinet itself is medieval, I take it?"

"Yes; I picked it up in Siena."

"While I believe you mentioned the other day that that binding at your elbow was done for—what's-his-name——?"

"The Petrarch is a Grolier." She touched it caressingly. "This other thing was——"

"Never mind," he cut in. "Surely I've catalogued enough of them to enforce my point! Can't you guess your own ailment? Can't you write your own prescription?"

Miss Marbury looked bewildered.

"You mean——?" she hesitated.

"I mean you're mentally dyspeptic, of course. Change your diet. Try a few common things."

Miss Marbury took his brusquerie humbly.

"How sane you are!" she responded.

"How bracing! Now, if you would only go a step further and tell me where to begin——"

"There you are!" West broke in. "Such poverty of resource is itself a symptom of disease."

For an instant his listener looked as if she found his frankness almost too tonic, but his next remark soothed her self-esteem.

"The fact that I can't give you a

clean-cut answer proves that I'm bitten with it, too," he added disgustedly. "We're all of us more or less over-civilized. We goad our emotions as we tickle our jaded palates. Look at our very churches; they spice our faith, spice our hope, spice our charity. Simple things have lost all savor. Who cares for a truly natural book, a wholesome play? Yes"—his eye fell upon a bowl of gorgeous maroon chrysanthemums—"who even cares for a common flower?"

He buttoned his overcoat with a series of decisive jerks and explored energetically for his gloves. Miss Marbury groped desperately for a pretext to spin out the interview. Her makeshift was fatuous, but it served.

"What is your favorite flower?" she inquired; and then bit her lip at the question's inanity. To her relief West gave the matter his serious consideration.

"The jonquil," he answered after a little pause.

"How singular!" said she. "Jonquils are such awkward things to arrange."

"True; if people will arrange them."

"And they're often cloyingly sweet."

"True again—indoors."

"Oh," said the lady, brightening, "I see. You are thinking of a formal garden. A friend of mine used them very effectively at her place at Lenox, I remember. There was a space just below the pergola which—"

West's expression made her falter.

"No, no, no," he interposed. "I'm not thinking of any such trig, fashionable affair at all. There wasn't a pergola within a hundred miles of the spot I mean."

She waited for further explanations, but he forsook the topic in midair to refer to the nurse whose return was heralded by a growing tinkle of glass.

"Why did you take Miss Wilson out of uniform?" he demanded in an undertone.

"I disliked seeing it after you let me get up. Then, too, she has become more companion than nurse."

"I sha'n't thank you if you over-

civilize her," he frowned. "Don't spoil a really useful member of society."

He gave the nurse one or two directions and extended his hand to Miss Marbury.

"I sha'n't call again unless I'm sent for," he announced.

She detained his hand an instant.

"Please drop in unprofessionally," she entreated. "I'd like to ask you about so many things. There's that unfinished jonquil story, for example."

West shook his head emphatically at the mention of social calls.

"I find little time for that sort," he stated candidly. "As for the story"—he hesitated on the threshold—"there's a little play running downtown called 'Jonquils' which, in a way, explains what I'm driving at. It isn't much of a play, I suppose, but it's well meant, and more than well acted."

"Why, to be sure," said Miss Marbury. "It's that little curtain-raiser at the Garrick. Would you prescribe it for—me?"

West laughed—a trifle consciously, she fancied; and for an instant seemed to hover on the brink of a confidence. To her chagrin it came to nothing.

"Those tablets I handed Miss Wilson are my only prescription," he returned abruptly. "Good day."

Miss Marbury walked to the window and watched him address some brief order to his chauffeur, light a cigar, and then, without a glance right or left, much less upward, enter his automobile and glide swiftly down the street.

"Iceberg!" she shivered, turning away.

"I beg your pardon," said the nurse.

"Nothing. I was merely wondering if your Dr. West is always so impersonal. Do you suppose he ever sees a woman in any other light than as an anatomical specimen—so many bones to classify, so much tissue to dissect?"

Miss Wilson refused to smile. In fact, she bridled. West had as imposing a feminine chorus as a popular clergyman, and she was of the superlatively loyal.

"No one in pain or real trouble ever thought him hard," she rejoined in a tone which her interlocutor felt tantamount to rebuke. "I've mentioned case after case, any one of which answers your criticism."

"Yes, I know," said Miss Marbury, with a sudden bored perception that a fund of anecdote in which West prominently figured had had much to do with this young person's change of status from nurse to confidante. "Pray don't take me so seriously," she added lightly. "Nobody else does. Of course the man is human, if appearances are against him. Will you touch the bell, please? I am going to follow instructions and get more oxygen."

For upward of an hour thereafter Miss Marbury's brougham formed a unit in the afternoon pageant of the Park. She was scarcely of it herself, however. At times she would emerge from her preoccupation long enough to return a bow, but oftener her friends whipped by in puzzled affront. Suddenly she took up the tube communicating with her coachman and bade him drive to a downtown address which in due course proved to be a florist's. She stayed the nurse's movement to alight.

"Don't bother," she said; "let me practice shifting for myself. I can't expect to have you with me always."

It was courteously spoken, but to the other woman's ear it seemed prophetic of a not distant parting of their ways. As the carriage moved on at a burly police officer's behest, she speculated idly upon her next assignment.

In certain shops Miss Marbury's entrance always induced an abnormal activity. This was one of them. No less than three overdressed attendants awoke from a statuesque leisure and raced for the privilege of receiving her commands. She tranquilly awaited the issue of their rivalry and brought her lorgnon to bear upon the victor.

"Jonquils," she said laconically.

With apologies befitting his crime the clerk explained that jonquils were out of season. A further discourse upon the disobliging habits of the

flower lost at once its audience and its point with the bustling arrival of the proprietor himself.

"You said jonquils, Miss Marbury?" he interrupted. "You have come to the one dealer in the city who can fill your order."

She followed the complacent little Greek to a vast refrigerator, from one of whose lower compartments he drew a jar of the yellow blossoms she sought.

"Behold!" he cried, with a flourish. "Jonquils in December."

Miss Marbury gave the miracle a polite scrutiny.

"I dare say it is a bit early for them," she remarked. "How did you manage it?"

The Greek's chest expanded.

"How?" he repeated. "By patience; that is the secret, madam. The jonquil is a stubborn fellow. He likes not to be hurried. He demands his winter sleep. He must be frozen, in short. Mostly, when forced, he comes up—as we florists say—blind. For a handful of blossoms you often massacre a hundred bulbs, poor innocents! But I—I did not hesitate at the sacrifice. It was in the cause of art, of beauty."

His customer took the latter reference to herself at first, but he speedily undeceived her.

"An artist asked me to coax them out," he went on to explain. "'The expense,' say he, 'nossing!' You know these great artists, madam? He tells me he must have them for the portrait of a lady—an actress. In her play are jonquils and he would pose her in—in—how shall I say the English?"

"I presume you mean in character," supplied Miss Marbury. "How very interesting. Now, if the artist has had all he needs I will take the remainder. And let me have some ribbon to match the petals—several yards, I think. I wish to arrange them myself."

The florist stood by, outwardly all admiration but with fingers which ached to interfere, while she grouped and regrouped the unpliant stems.

"There," she said finally, with a last critical glance; "I think that will do."

She handed him her card, mentioned the street and number to which the flowers were at once to be sent, and turned away. The Greek overtook her just as his liveried carriage attendant was with due pomp and circumstance delivering this most valued patron into the hands of her own retainers.

"But the name?" he supplicated. "Madam has forgotten to give the name."

Miss Marbury blushed.

"West," she murmured hurriedly.

"Dr. Roger West."

"West," trumpeted the little man with odious particularity. "Dr. Roger West."

Miss Marbury avoided her companion's eyes.

"The Garrick Theatre," she directed, as the footman closed the door of the carriage; then added casually to Miss Wilson: "Everybody dins that play 'Jonquils' in my ears. Tonight we'll judge it for ourselves."

"You're sure you feel equal to it?" asked the nurse, with professional solicitude. "You have not tried late hours yet, remember."

"Quite sure. It's merely a one-act little thing, you know. If we like we can leave before the regular play. It is the curtain-raiser, apparently, which is the fad."

They met ample proof of the latter fact during an unconscionable wait at the box-office. The clamorous ticket speculators lining the curb proffered "seats for 'Jonquils'," the passers-by had no comment for the longer play, the very press notices upon the billboards flanking the entrance dealt with the curtain-raiser alone; while further up the street they spied a sign-painter, slung far aloft alongside a dead wall, blocking in a huge presentment of the all-significant flower. When the footman finally reappeared at the window of the brougham it was to report that the one hope of seats for that evening lay with the usurers of the sidewalk.

"Hit's this 'Jawnquils' what's to blyme," he explained feelingly.

Miss Marbury herself now took the negotiation in hand and presently drove home successful. Her interest, at first casual, was now whetted keen, and she employed what leisure remained to her before dinner in a reperusal of such criticisms of the little play as she could lay hands upon. She regretted that she had not hit upon the idea of a box-party including West, though she doubted whether so busy a man could be induced to witness any play twice. Ultimately, she decided that if he could be tempted, she would carry out the project yet.

This latter decision, which she reached in the theatre during the overture, was the upshot of a scrap of overheard conversation on the part of an apparently sane gentleman, sitting just behind, who very audibly confessed that he had already seen "Jonquils" four times. This enthusiast had other revelations. He knew the playwright, it seemed, whose name the program did not state; and he had met the young actress whose interpretation of "Jonquils" had instantly proclaimed her an artist of unsuspected imagination and power.

One bit of monologue ran thus:

"She made a hit at the school of acting—couldn't help it, you know—and when the time came she didn't lack for engagements. They weren't anything big, her roles; light comedy, ingénue, mostly—same sort of thing you'll see her handle in the regular play tonight. It's good, legitimate acting, but not to be mentioned in the 'Jonquils' class."

His feminine companion here interposed a low-pitched question.

"Why, it was this way," he continued. "As her guardian, he naturally felt that he knew her capabilities better than the managers. Besides, he knows the stage. He has been a student of the drama for years. It's almost his only recreation. Well, as I was saying, he didn't like the parts they gave her, and was always on the hunt for something better. Nothing ready-made seemed to fit, and finally he took his ideas to one or two play-writing friends.

They were unimaginative hacks, I guess, for they laughed at him. He had fractured the unities, or something sacred to theatrical red tape. Anyhow, such tomfool stuff couldn't be acted, and wouldn't be listened to if it could. So he just turned to and wrote this little curtain-raiser himself. Some boyhood memory suggested it, he said. Beg pardon? You always thought him a grumpy woman-hater? That's a good joke, if you only knew it." The man chuckled happily a moment. "You don't see the point? Of course not. You'd see it quick enough if you could guess another little story that's back of 'Jonquils.' Don't tease me to tell. He—they—that is, it wouldn't be good business to let the public into the secret yet. What! I've as good as told? Nonsense! Why can't it mean anything else, Miss Cleverness? Well, then, it is so. He said that if the newspapers—" Whereupon the music swelled to an abrupt climax, the speaker's voice trailed off indistinctly, and the house darkened for the play.

A formless query haunted Miss Marbury's mind as the curtain rose. It was as elusive as a will-o'-the-wisp, the shadow cast by a question to come rather than a full-blown interrogation; and before she could even attempt to capture it, the stage picture routed it utterly.

The play! Who of the thousands that surrendered to its naive charm ever succeeded in telling precisely what it was that won them? Descriptions never described it. If one playgoer vaguely called it the story of a children's party, another would promptly scout such a labeling; it was nothing so studied; say, rather, a chance flocking together of youngsters just loose from the school-room. In one thing, however, all agreed: its keynote was spring. The treble laughter, the tender green of the foliage, the glowing bed of jonquils bordering the old-fashioned garden where the little comedy ran its course—these, and a hundred deft touches, all bespoke life in its vernal freshness. Plot there

was almost none. A fairy tale from the lips of the impromptu child hostess, a game or two, a quarrel, a reconciliation—such, baldly stated, were its elements from which, thus dissected, you found that the living thing itself had taken wing. Its volatile essence was no more to be distilled in words than the childhood it so subtly interpreted can be lived twice.

In common with the great audience Miss Marbury caught her breath when the end came. That momentary hush always followed the drop of the curtain as surely as it, in turn, would give place to a tempest of applause. Miss Marbury's enthusiasm seldom discharged its well-bred energy in manual form, but a split seam in her left glove later convinced her that for once she had shared an emotion with the common ruck. Then the curtain lifted again and one grasped the prime wonder of it all, that the central figure in the supremely natural scene was no twelve-year-old girl, but a woman.

Miss Marbury's talkative neighbor again launched into explanations.

"She spent day after day watching children in the parks," he was saying. "Her husband helped her a lot, too. He's a keen observer, extraordinarily keen. His profession trains him, I suppose. She got many a point from him in the rehearsals. He gives them yet, for that matter. You'll often see him here. He drops into the manager's box over there in the lower right-hand tier. Her voice? It's as mature as your own. She is taller than she looks on the stage. You see, her spring-heels—"

But at this pass something vastly more important quenched Miss Marbury's languid interest in his gossip. An usher was handing flowers over the footlights. To her unaided vision they seemed yellow. A closer scrutiny proved them jonquils—jonquils in December—jonquils loosely bound together with a familiar knot of ribbon the color of their petals! The card of the giver brushed the actress's fingers and with a womanly little gesture of

pleasure she raised her eyes from its legend to a box in the lower right-hand tier.

Miss Marbury's clattering lorgnon drew the nurse's glance.

"It has tired you," she exclaimed contritely. "We shouldn't have come."

Miss Marbury rose.

"It has been a bit of a bore," she said.



TRODDEN HARD

THREE thousand years or more ago
King Solomon, both sage and bard,
Observed a fact he noted thus:
"The way of the transgressor's hard."

The question why is oft discussed,
But this solution seems complete:
The sinner's way is hard because
It's trodden by so many feet!

WILLIAM B. HILLS.



HAPPY FAMILY

"ARE they a devoted couple?"
"Yes; he's devoted to horses and she to whist."



A STREET-CAR DIALOGUE

HOWELL—Will you change seats with me? The man next to me is a creditor of mine.

POWELL—How much do you owe him?

"Ten dollars."

"Can't do it, old man; I owe him twenty."



AFTER THE WEDDING

MRS. HOLT—Didn't you think the groom looked too foolish for anything?
HOLT—Yes—anything but matrimony.

ON LOVE-LETTERS

By Frank S. Arnett

Who art thou, and what is thy genesis, terrible demon whom men call Love? . . . Its touch alone suffices to destroy the most robust organizations and overthrow the mightiest intellects. Virtue, honor, wealth, reputation and happiness it scatters before it as the tempest blast disperses a handful of withered leaves. Wise men it turns to fools, rich ones to beggars; misers it metamorphoses to spendthrifts, turtle-doves and lambs to rapacious vultures and raging lions, venerable gray-bearded men to childish simpletons, and innocent virgins to Messalinas and Jezebels; causing all sorts and conditions of men to revolve at its bidding in the frenzied mazes of a wild Sabbath dance. Suppress Love, and we shall have banished pain, sorrow, poverty and bloodshed from the face of our globe; suppress Love and we shall have found again the terrestrial paradise.—*The Extermination of Love.*

THE more carefully this doctrine is considered—and, alas! the more reminiscently—the more self-evident become its truths, the more certain becomes one's faith in the prophesied outcome of the experiment. Unfortunately for those that would welcome a high-priestess for the new religion that is to banish love, Madame de Laszowska, who wrote the quoted paragraph, does not herself believe it. She places the doctrine in the mouth of her hero and then, in the end, has him trepanned for the removal of a tumor that pressed upon the brain. Whereupon, coming to himself, he that has spent his life in seeking a serum for inoculation against the curse of love, at once exclaims to the first woman he sees: "How beautiful you are! Kiss me!" Which merely shows that the insane sometimes become less sensible when cured.

Nay, madam, let us adopt the ad-

vice of your hero, given in the days before he realized the beauty of women or longed for the touch of their lips. Let us establish public sanatoriums for this great work; let all civilized governments pass laws for compulsory love-inoculation so that posterity may be saved from this burden of misery. Only—let us be self-sacrificing. Let us start it for the benefit of the next generation. Let them be the first to receive this great blessing—they will not know what they are missing. To us, carrying the before-mentioned burden of misery is like the parting of Shakespeare's most famous sweethearts, the sorrow of which, you will recall, was sufficiently bearable to cause it to be drawn out until the morrow. And so it is better, perhaps, that you and I should bear with love until the time when it must be yielded up with all other earthly things.

You see we have grown rather accustomed to the thing, and to be dragged off to the hospital and forcibly cured of the disease might, at this late day, seriously annoy us. Among the minor results would be, for example, the fact that for all time thereafter we should have to confine ourselves strictly to business, being unacquainted with any other passion. No more theatre-going; we wouldn't have the faintest idea of what Romeo or de Bergerac was talking—or, if we did, it would be an unpleasant reminder of the madness of which we had been cured. Our fiction, too, would have to be confined to the news columns of the daily papers; could we sympathize with the feelings of Rebecca or

Ivanhoe, of Lorna Doone, of Anna Karénina, of Maslova, or even of Jacques Casanova? Not at all. They would become to us merely a set of jibbering idiots—and it's just possible that we would curse the fellow that had cured us of jibbering.

No; for the present generation it would not do at all. Of course, when, of necessity, we are quite through with the world, with women, with brains and with breath, we can leave all our money to the founding of hospitals for the cure of love, endow the Watch and Ward Society of Boston with the request that it confiscate and burn all copies of Shakespeare, the Psalms, the Decameron, Browning and the rest—and die convinced that we are benefactors of our race.

Burned, too, must be all the literature of love-letters—the letters of Petrarch and Laura, Dante and Beatrice, George Sand and de Musset, of Michael Angelo, of Franz Liszt, of Margaret Fuller, of the Portuguese nun, of Adah Isaacs Menken. Aye, and all the love-letters that have not become a part of literature, but are locked carefully away in garrets—or, perhaps, nearer at hand. My, what an *auto-da-fé* there will be! And what a bringing together of the written confessions of the most incongruous people!—men and women of genius and men and women touched by the moon; priests and criminals, paupers and millionaires, slaves and emperors—all of them at some time afflicted with the same disease; their letters twirling and crackling in this common dance of flame, flying ablaze into air and falling blackened to ashes—as though possessed of the madness that once, because of love, surged in the minds of their authors.

For the safeguard of posterity they must all go, of course. They would counteract all the good accomplished by the sanatoriums. Count Alessandro Manzoni—he of “I Promessi Sposi”—realized the danger of a similar contagion through literature. Explaining the absence of all love scenes from his novels, he said:

One must not speak of love in a way to lead others toward that passion. . . . There will always be a sufficient amount of it in this world; we need not, therefore, take the pains of cultivating it in others, for in cultivating it one only helps to arouse it where it is not wanted. . . . If by a miracle some day I should be inspired with the most eloquent love pages that man has ever written, I should not even take a pen to jot them on paper, so certain am I that I should regret it.

And yet the other day someone published a volume entitled “Lessons in Love”! At this rate some day we may have “How Easiest to Catch Smallpox”; or, perhaps, “Guaranteed Methods of Going Insane.” Still, Manzoni was somewhat needlessly careful. The real danger rests not so much in imaginary love scenes as in the publication of real love-letters—and, incidentally, putting a love-letter into print is an act of the same delicacy and high feeling as is that of bringing a suit for breach of promise; because, as I hope later to convince you, love-letters, besides being a form of microbe, or a sort of silent mosquito carrying the love germ as the noisier one carries that of malaria, are, in fact, preserved and thus made a possible sacrifice to a soulless publisher merely because they represent the ephemeral love of someone dead, lost or faithless. Therefore they are mementoes of what has been, in a sense, a tragedy, and to make public the tragedy of a heart is a crime the law ignores.

In my commonplace-book I find a single quotation hinting at this same interpretation of the preservation of love-letters. It is this:

Types and memorials of past happiness. Relics of bygone hours and days and memories that can never come again save in dreams. How many such there are in the world, thousands upon thousands of time-stained, tear-stained epistles, sad and yet sweet evidences of a love that, passionate as it would seem, had no strength to stand the test of adverse circumstances; of a friendship sealed by many a vow long since broken and forgotten.

Such letters form the unmistakable symptoms of this disease. True, in explaining the absence of any such in the collection made of Hamilton's cor-

respondence, their editor hazarded the guess that "perhaps he never wrote any," although "his annual receipts must have been heavy." Wise Hamilton! He proved that every man's mind does not wander even when the fever is at its height. Or perhaps I am wrong. It may be that none of his fair correspondents died, and, in the case of such a man, he was not likely to find them faithless. For, as I have indicated, regret must embalm the love-letter that is preserved. In a love-affair certainty is a destroying angel.

From what has just been said you will see—although it is odd that even for a moment I should have imagined you do not know it already—that the letters preserved include not only those received, but also, and alas! those sent; those, in fact, that have come back to us. It is also not unworthy of record that, in returning a sometime sweetheart's letters—after the almost inevitable parting—we hold out just one. And not always the right one, either. In this exchange of letters we sometimes make mistakes—particularly in extreme youth; for example, that calm, sisterly and dispassionate letter of hers that you have told her had been torn into a thousand pieces, yet which you mistakenly and absent-mindedly inclosed with the rest when her mother demanded their return.

Probably, therefore—I hope you see the connection—the love-letters he received were burned by Hamilton, following the example of Bassompierre, who thus got rid of some six thousand the day before that on which he knew he was to be arrested and sent by Richelieu to the Bastille. By so much he lightened the labors of the future exterminators of love. And he did a second service; for a love-letter should lose its charm when read by any but the one to whom it is written. It should not even interest any but that one; if it does it "emanates from a poet or a fraud." Of the latter character, for example, was that count of whom Goethe tells us, who throughout each day kept his inventive secretary busy

writing the most passionate letters, and who each evening would select the best, copy it, and send it to his temporary sweetheart. You will agree with me, I hope, in the belief that these were not "really and truly" love-letters.

Indeed, the love-letter, in a stranger's eyes, may go beyond even the fraudulent, the laughable or the ridiculous. Sometimes it may appear even sinful where once it had seemed holy. For instance, some way—you never could remember just how it came about—she has visited you; and you have left her there, with the opportunity of dissecting you by means of your books, your pictures, your pipes and your unfinished manuscript or drawing, or whatever it may be. And, when you return, in the room is a faint, familiar and maddening perfume, and on the table a hastily, tremblingly penciled love-letter—three lines: "The king commands and I obey. But, oh, your majesty, how I hate to go!" And, by the first post on the morrow, arrive other lines—without which tear-stained confirmation you would have thought it all a dream—written you on the very night of the day on which she confessed in those other fright-eloquenced words that you were lord of her soul. These are the real love-letters.

And that is why it goes so hard with a man when it is over—which, some day, it is certain to be. The woman, in her acts and in her written and spoken words, has so made of him a king that when he is hurled from the throne it is as difficult for him to assume the role of an ordinary mortal as for any actual monarch contentedly to fill that of exile. The man cries out in an agony of honesty:

Having been your lover
I cannot stoop to be your friend.

Whereas the woman will meet him without a heart-throb, welcome him at dinner, introduce him to her husband, and apparently think no more of his presence than that of the most commonplace social acquaintance. In her love-letters, and in her conduct after she has ceased to write them, the woman shows herself the actress born.

Sometimes in losing her and in losing her love it is as Anthony Hope has said: there is not "much to lose of what is most easily lost." But usually there is much to lose, and its loss is just as easy, just as certain—and it hurts.

True, men are more brutal in their breaking off of a love correspondence; women more gentle, yet with less of personal feeling. Women hate to give up possession even after they have ceased to care for it. Hence they quit slowly, at first writing at long intervals, occasionally asking a meeting merely to convince themselves they are still supreme, only absence and new conquests finally making them quite fail to desire or to remember. Sometimes the woman is more honest; the man notes the delicate change in her wording, the gradual elimination of the old-time terms of endearment, and is thus not unprepared for her announcement of her marriage. In this case usually she offers him the half-meant assurance of her lifelong friendship. Now few have spoken more accurately than that anonymous writer who said that "the highest mark of esteem a woman can give a man is to ask his friendship; the most signal proof of her indifference is to offer him hers."

But even when she is thus frank—and occasionally she carries it to the extreme of sending us cards for the church ceremony—even then, unfortunately, not all of us a week or so later can say with dear old Dick Swiveller's optimism: "By this time, I should say, the iron has entered into her soul." On the contrary we have a sneaking conviction that she is supremely happy and that our successful rival is really a better fellow than we are; we are afraid his love-letters were more eloquent than ours; and too often we simply cannot deny the fact that he is better looking and has more money.

This frankness is not, however, natural in a woman. Usually it is her silence, not her honesty of words, that tells the man the truth. A woman rarely tells a man she has ceased to love him. She will lie in words even while her every act proclaims the lie.

Men lie from pity; women from egotism. Thus he is likely to be something of a brute when ultimately the man is actually truthful. Nevertheless one marvels that Swift and Gibbon, for example, could have seated themselves cold-bloodedly to write the words they did. The dean, particularly—in his writings the master genius of insult, in his loves the most tragic cur that ever lived.

Sometimes, but not often, we realize, as Swift and Gibbon did not, the idiocy of it all, or appreciate the disease from which we suffer. In that case, why do we cultivate the cursed contagion, why do we preserve the evidences of our derangement—these epistolary poisons that have aggravated our malady? As I have already pointed out, we do so only when the letters are those of the dead, the lost or the faithless. Said George Moore in "Mike Fletcher"—but this was when he was more truthfully epigrammatic and less rabidly Celtic: "You cannot desire what you possess." That, briefly, is the keynote of the whole symphony of unburned love-letters. The scarcity of real love-letters preserved in literature is due to the fact that the majority of men destroy these epistles when they marry the writers, or when they are about to die if they happen not to have married them—which generally they don't. It may be admitted, in passing, that marriage is sometimes a partial substitute for a perfect cure for love. In it, those that have been thus afflicted change from violent insanity to mere melancholia—which is less strenuous for the patient and less of a nuisance to the public.

It is because of the ultimate realization of this idiocy—this hypocrisy it sometimes is—or because they have become legal or otherwise actual possessors, that men have destroyed these mementoes. Until quite recently the most famous letters in literature have not been, therefore, those of love; or, if so, merely of love used as a basis for literary gaiety, gossip, epigram and extravagance. The mention of a

half-dozen, perhaps the greatest letter-writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, will indicate the character of this particular class.

The Marquise de Sévigné, picturing with life and charm the society of her time; the Marquise du Deffand, "the wittiest woman who ever lived," frank, bold, fascinating the most brilliant men of all Europe, holding her splendid salon during thirty years of blindness in the Convent of St. Joseph, desiring love and gaining only a mental supremacy, yet writing Horace Walpole during their "intellectual flirtation": "I renounce my errors and am absolutely persuaded that of all illusions that (of friendship) is the most dangerous. You who are the apostle of this wise doctrine, receive my confession and my vows never to love, never to seek to be loved by anyone."

The letters of Walpole himself should, perhaps, head the list, "fiddles singing all through them," as Thackeray has said. "Wax lights, fine dresses, fine jokes, fine equipages, glitter and sparkle there; never was such a brilliant, jiggling, smirking Vanity Fair as that through which he leads us"—no real love, no heart, just wit and foppery, just the fascinating dawdle of the busiest of idlers.

Ranking with Walpole's are the letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, "representative of the weakness and strength of that age of light without sweetness," in whom was summed up "the eighteenth century masquerading as a woman"—a century that would "sacrifice the ten commandments to an epigram."

Nearer the subject, yet not quite of it, are the letters of Madame D'Arblay, sincere, gossipy, interesting; and those of Madame de la Live d'Épinay—to Grimm, Diderot and Rousseau—showing a desire for the intellectual in the hope that it might drown the hopelessness of the marital.

In none of these do we find evidence that the writers had actually been infected with the disease. Frequently they clearly show its absence, yet at least in the letters of the Marquise du

Deffand and of Madame de la Live d'Épinay the unsatisfied love of love is evinced—a strange and almost fatal form of the malady. It must be remembered, however, that the period in which these fair women at last gave up the struggle was decidedly cold-blooded. Even the language of love was forgotten in worship of so-called pure reason and common sense. Listen to John Tweddell writing to his sweetheart, Isabel Gunning:

To the exercise of the social affections and the peaceful habits of domestic life, I look as to the foundations of my comfort and the limit of my wishes. Those beings alone appear to me to be really happy who under the tranquil convictions of a benevolent Providence spend their lives in improving their minds and in exercising their virtues.

There's a passionate letter for you! Mr. Tweddell, at least, had no need of inoculation for the cure of love. And just imagine writing in that strain to a cousin of the incomparable, "the beautiful Gunnings"! If Isabel was satisfied with that sort of thing, then I should have preferred the heartless Montagu as a sweetheart; for Talleyrand, who should have known better, never made a greater error than when he said: "One must have loved a woman of genius in order to comprehend what happiness there is in loving a fool."

For solace let us go back another century, to a period when a love-letter was a love-letter. Gallant John Spottiswood, devoted follower of the Marquis of Montrose, thus wrote in 1646 to a certain Lady Janet:

They say loving has gone out of fashion, sweetheart; then I am sure that neither you nor I can be in the fashion. For surely, if love be out of fashion, kissing must likewise be; and that that was a kiss you gave me when you took leave of me (and sad leave it was, sweetheart!) both my mouth and thine will testify. Your lips trembled, sweet, and the tears stood in your eyes, and yet I loved that gentle quivering better far than even the brightest smile you ever gave me when first I saw you, sweetheart, ah, so long ago.

Nothing wonderful? Oh, not at all. It only shows that, three hundred years and more ago, brave, true men

wrote love-letters almost identical with those that are written today. It is almost a pity to reflect that, had these two lived to marry, their disease would have been acted upon by an automatic, self-regulating soothing syrup known as the disillusion of possession.

We rather sympathize with these love-letters of the long ago; yet, while it is supposed that all the world loves a lover, as a general rule all the world laughs at a love-letter—unless it is from or to oneself. Outwardly, that is, not in secret. In secret we strive to read between the lines, to find thoughts the lovers concealed even from themselves.

Yet, despite this public show of mirth, there has been in the last few years a craze for the publication of love-letters. Even fictional ones have mounted to the proud position of "best sellers." Read any or all if you wish—that is, all but one. If you're not to join the League for the Extermination of Love, if you wish to sleep with the conviction that any good is left in women, even in the woman you love, then do not read Max Nordau's "Comedy of Sentiment." In the end of it all the man finds her letters to another. The postmarks show the dates. "He read them—there were the same intoxicating words which he knew so well, which she had also written to him on the same days, probably on the same hours."

And from this what does the hero benefit? The knowledge that "all the words, movements and acts, which apparently only the most ardent love inspires, can be feigned"; the realization that doubt as to the truth of all love is "the greatest impoverishment which any human heart can endure"; and the conviction that "a sensible man ought to tell himself that he must necessarily be the dupe if he plays a comedy of sentiment with a woman, for in that she is always his superior." Somewhat axiomatic and well-known truths, are they not, to be learned at the cost of a ruined life?

But this was fiction; the photo-

graphic accuracy makes one forget. Let us then look at the real love-letters with which of late the book-shops have been crowded. Chief among these have been those of the Brownings, the Carlyles, of Victor Hugo, Bismarck, Goethe, Balzac, Margaret Fuller, Dorothy Osborne, Mademoiselle Lespinasse, of de Maupassant and Marie Bashkirtseff, Napoleon and Josephine, Benjamin Constant and Madame Récamier. Now these dozen sets of letters represent almost as many phases of the disease, and yet a diagnosis of several will show us that all indicate the one universal result.

When Marie Bashkirtseff found the epistles of Guy de Maupassant growing longer and more longing, did she not candidly write: "At your fifth letter I was chilled. . . . Satiety?"

Yes, at an abnormally early stage, the fever here having abated without even reaching the customary "crisis." When he wrote again, asking an appointment with his unknown correspondent and promising that on the morrow she could say, "Adieu, monsieur"—she responded not a line. When a woman allows a man to have the last word, even when the man has never been seen, the satiety of certainty has reached its apotheosis.

Again, the love-letters of Mademoiselle Julie de Lespinasse, letters M. Sainte-Beuve pronounced "a series of immortal paintings and testimonies of passion"—the resemblance of which to Mrs. Humphry Ward's "Lady Rose's Daughter" created a quite unnecessary sensation—were first published by Madame de Guibert. I have only to remind you that it was to the husband of Madame de Guibert these letters were addressed in order to show you a phenomenon of the disease, the satiety of possession in this case being so profound that even jealousy found no place. It is also not unworthy of passing mention that the letters were warmly praised by Madame de Staël, whose first lover had been this same favored M. de Guibert. If you will not admit that love is either a contagious disease or a form of insanity, you

may be further comforted by the proof offered by these facts that, of whatsoever sort, it is at least a decidedly ephemeral affliction. Supposing it, on the other hand, to be a disease, it is unfortunate that no one can ever hope to become immune.

How seldom, when we have the love-letters as evidence, is there room for doubt as to the seldom confessed truth. How this duel between passion and possession is pictured, for example, in the letters of Napoleon to Josephine! How they show the man's love waxing because he knew her to be faithless, and the woman's waning because she knew his love to be, with all his faithlessness, her own! Listen to these extracts from his letters from Italy, the letters of a man we have been accustomed to imagine as an imperial ravisher rather than as a suppliant wooer:

My life is a perpetual nightmare. A presentiment of ill oppresses me. I see you no longer. I have lost more than life, more than happiness, I am almost without hope. I hasten to send a courier to you. He will stay in Paris only four hours and then bring me your reply.

Ever since I have known you I worship you more every day. . . . Ah! pray let me see some of your faults; be less beautiful, less gracious, less tender, and, especially, less kind; above all never weep; your tears madden me, fire my blood. Be sure that it is no longer possible for me to have a thought except for you, or an idea of which you shall not be the judge.

Humiliated, driven to despair though he was by her utter indifference, he throughout life remained her friend—in a sense, indeed, her lover. Even in divorcing her he did not offer as excuse the crime with which a hundred times he might have charged her, giving, indeed, a cause unflattering to himself. And yet, for nearly a century the world has believed him a heartless husband, her a faithful, heart-broken wife.

Love-letters are, however, not unlike statistics: by quoting them you can prove almost anything. And so it is only fair to speak of Dorothy Osborne, who, after looking at the subject in the most hopeful light, was the great exception, she whose beauty of soul made her to Temple "in fact, as well as in name, the gift of God." But doubtless more typical was the famous actress who continued impartially to write letters "to the faithful lover whom she never loved and to the faithless lover whom she always loved." In her was shown the character evolved by the "real thing" in the way of a man's love, the love that makes us idiots, causing us to do and write just the things that make the woman turn to the other fellow—the fellow that does not do or write them simply because he is not in love. If, when you have recovered, you could minutely analyze the mental condition you have experienced, you would find it had been not unlike that of the opium fiend—and, if you have ever experienced that, you know how close it is to insanity.

Love is beautiful at times, but so, at certain stages, is consumption. Unlike consumption, it is seldom fatal. No Christian Science is needed to prove to us that it is based upon the non-existent, a dream, a desire.

And yet—and yet—

Must I, then, with bathos as the peroration of all my eloquence, translate, roughly, from *Les Étagés*?

After all, is not a dream the daily bread of existence? Is not life really hope incessantly renewed? Is not each moment of the day a desire, a longing, a fiction? Strip reality of this efflorescence and what remains? Reality is nothing but a pretense for life. That which is, is but the narrow stone touched by our feet that we may spring to that which is not.



PRUDENCE

SHE—Oh, you may be quite candid with me.

HE—Well, to be quite candid, I think I'd better not.

A NEST OF HEPATICAS

O PASSION of the coming of the spring!
 When the light love has captured everything,
 When all the winter of the year's dry prose
 Is rhymed to rapture, rhythm'd to the rose,
 When all the heart's desire is fondly set
 Just to remember never to forget;
 O season of the mild and misty eves,
 With the deep sky seen through the growing leaves!
 Where in the crocus west the evening star
 Grows distant from the moon, and sinks afar
 As she grows lovelier; when the willow wands
 Burst their brown buds in gray and gleaming bands,
 And score the surface of the amber pool
 With little motes of silver beautiful;
 When the hepatica, with her flushing crest,
 Blooms in the leaves above the secret nest,
 Where all her sisters, fairer far than she,
 Lie curled in a frail silken galaxy:
 Like a young girl's first, timid thought of love
 That blossoms in her liquid eyes, above
 A nest of hopes so secret and so fair
 She hardly knows herself that they are there.

DUNCAN CAMPBELL SCOTT.



AN UNFRIENDLY OPINION

FREDDIE—What's a connoisseur, dad?

COBWIGGER—He's a fellow who gives more for a second-hand article than he would have to pay for a new one.



A FEAT

BROWNE—Was that clairvoyant any good?

LOWNE—Yes; he predicted what would be the cost of a five-thousand-dollar cottage when finished.

BIFFKINS OF BOOLOO

By Ethel Sigsbee Small

YOU never heard about him? Really? Well, it's time you did.

One summer, when Glenda and I were twelve, Mrs. Wilderson got nervous prostration and the doctor said if she didn't get away from her family she'd die. It isn't that her family are horrid or cruel or anything of that sort, but they do make a good deal of noise. Bernice sings and has beaux, and Glenda has her acting—and some of the parts call for shrieks; then Alonso is a boy, which is the same as saying he is a wild Indian, and Mr. Wilderson writes speeches and practices saying them to a looking-glass; besides which the cook, Muriel, has fits. So, you see, it isn't exactly what you would call a peaceful household.

So when the doctor ordered her away from everybody, she went, and admitted that the quiet would be delightful; and the family said good-bye and admitted that it would be rather refreshing to be able to sing and act and slide down the banisters and make speeches without being told to "S—sh!" So it was a very pleasant arrangement all around.

After Mrs. Wilderson had gone, Mr. Wilderson used to go to the office almost every night and not come in till early in the morning. Glenda has the room next to his, and she said he worked so hard that he would toss and moan in his sleep and talk about some man named Jack Potts who evidently hadn't been very kind to him. Finally he got all used up with so much hard work and so little sleep, and went down into the country to fish. He didn't go into the same country with Mrs.

Wilderson, but I guess that was because he would have made speeches to the fishes and disturbed her.

Well, in about a week Bernice went off to visit a chum of hers, and then Alonso got so bad and was so saucy to Glenda that when he said he was going to Dick Jones's house and stay with him till his mother got back, Glenda just let him. Dick Jones is a terribly bad boy—Mrs. Wilderson doesn't allow Alonso to play with him—but then, so is Alonso, so I don't see why they shouldn't go together.

That left only Glenda in the house, and Muriel the cook, and Betty the chambermaid. Glenda said she was afraid and lonely, and wanted me to come up and stay with her. Mama said that she never knew anything as irresponsible and unsettled as the Wilderson household at any time, but now she thought they were all crazy.

"The idea of leaving Glenda alone with that epileptic cook and a housegirl who hasn't sense enough not to wear a pompadour! And I don't believe Mrs. Wilderson has any more nervous prostration than I have," she said. Still, she let me go. I think it was because I listened to her so nicely.

Mama gave me a long list of directions of what I was to do and what I wasn't to do, and there was such a lot of the things I wasn't to do that I began to think maybe I'd better not go because I could sit still and fold my hands at home. Then she said she would come up and see us every afternoon, and that she would expect us to come and see her every morning. I sort of got out of the notion of going,

somehow. However, I went, and the day after Aunt Lou, papa's sister, got ill and mama left to visit her. She told Florence to take her place and go often to see me and remind me to go to bed early and take a bath every Wednesday and Saturday. But Florence had other things to think about. My, Glenda and I had fun!

We went to bed some nights as late as twelve, and some nights as early as seven, but we never got up till eleven. Then we had strawberry preserves for breakfast and coffee and pickles, and for luncheon cocoa and chocolate cake and pickles, and for dinner pickles and a few other things. We wore our prettiest dresses in the morning and didn't wear our ugly dresses at all. Those were heavenly days! I think even the servants enjoyed them. Betty wore the biggest pompadour she ever had, and stuck a red bow right in the middle of it, and in the evening her friends would come to see her—and she certainly was a popular girl, even Bernice never had so many men—and sing and dance and have fine little suppers. That was why we had so much cake and pickles and stuff. Betty kept it always on hand for her guests. Even old Muriel put on her best waist occasionally and joined Betty in her innocent revels. I told Glenda that I thought Mrs. Wilderson wouldn't have so much trouble with servants if she would let Glenda keep house all the time. And Glenda said her mother was always objecting to their having little harmless amusements like these, and that, between ourselves, she thought she was really the cause of Muriel's fits. It really looked like it, because she didn't have one all the time we were there.

Of course Glenda and I did other things besides eat and sleep. We passed some days dressed up in Mrs. Wilderson's clothes, and then sometimes we'd forget we had them on and they would get in our way terribly when we slid down the banisters or pulled taffy. There were some right pretty clothes there when I first came.

Mrs. Wilderson hadn't taken anything to the country except her wrapper and a walking-suit, by the doctor's orders, so we had plenty of things to choose from. But after awhile we got so we didn't care for any of them. They didn't seem to have much wear to them.

Then sometimes we played bookstore with all the books in the house, and jewelry-store with all Mrs. Wilderson's jewelry, and had jams of fun. But after awhile the books got so sort of under things, and the jewelry scattered itself about so, we couldn't get enough together to make any kind of store with. Still, there were plenty of other things to do, such as rearranging the rooms and getting all sorts of queer effects, and changing the positions of the different pictures, and one afternoon we had a perfectly glorious time walking on the keys of the piano in our bare toes. Did you ever do it? It feels awfully funny and tickly. You ought to try it. And sometimes, when you slip, you really make some very fine music—like Wagner. Glenda wanted to write it down, but she gave it up, it was so complicated.

Yes, those were golden times. There was only one thing that fell like a shadow on the joyous sunshine of our days. We were afraid of burglars. You see, the servants slept 'way upstairs, and our room was on the second floor. All around us were vacant rooms—Bernice's, Alonso's, Mrs. Wilderson's and Mr. Wilderson's, and Mr. Wilderson's little study. And I don't think there's anything, anyway, as scary as vacant rooms, do you? We used to get awful scared some nights, when it was windy and things creaked, so finally I invented a burglar-alarm.

The burglar-alarm was very complicated and hard to arrange. We put it against the door leading out into the garden, because Mr. Wilderson had said once that that door ought to have a bolt, and everybody had agreed with him and nobody had got one. First we balanced a dishpan on top of some small tin plates, then came several

glass bowls and tumblers, because glass breaking makes a fine big noise, and last of all a great silver bell. It was really a very fine burglar-alarm. Glenda said I ought to have it patented. I don't think it made us much happier, though, because we were always imagining what we would do if it ever *did* sound, and we both decided we shouldn't do anything, but just die quietly where we lay. One night we had a confused dream of a crashing, splintering noise and screams, but we were sleepy and couldn't rouse ourselves, and it was not until the next morning that Betty told us the burglar-alarm had gone off. Betty said she had shut her eyes very tight and screamed very loud. We were grateful to Betty for screaming—which I am sure was brave of her—and more grateful to her for not waking us. I don't think we could have been induced to spend another night alone in that house after that, but we didn't have to; the next day our guest came.

Glenda and I were sitting on the back piazza playing jewelry-store when a shadow fell across the porch, and there was a man standing on the bottom step.

"Good morning," said Glenda. "Are you looking for someone?"

"Is your mama in?" asked the man.

"No, she's away," said Glenda.

"Then I'll just ask you to call your papa," said the man.

"He's away, too," said Glenda.

The man didn't look at all surprised, but smiled in a contented sort of way.

"Betty and Muriel, the servants, are in. Did you come to see them?" asked Glenda.

"Well, no—no," said the man. Then he took off his hat and rubbed his hair. "This sun's hot," he said; "maybe I might come up and sit down if anybody asked me."

"Why, yes, come up," said Glenda.

We were both sort of puzzled. The man had quite a handsome face, but his clothes were shabby. We didn't know quite whether he was a gentleman or not. At first we had thought he wasn't, but we weren't sure; and

Glenda remembered the time when her father's cousin came from the West and she sent him around to the back door and how furious her father was, so she decided it wouldn't do any harm to be polite to this one.

The man sat down and looked at us and at the jewelry we had arranged in little boxes on the floor.

"I guess papa will be sorry to miss you," Glenda said when it seemed time to say something.

"Yes, I guess he will," said the man, and sort of chuckled.

When he said that, Glenda decided he was a friend or relative of her father's, so she got right up and put out her hand.

"I'm very glad to know you," she said. "Are you a cousin of papa's? This is my friend, Susan Roley."

"Delighted, Miss Roley," said the man. "No, I'm not a cousin of your papa's, but he'd know me if he heard of me—I'm well known."

"He knows lots of well-known people," said Glenda politely. "He knows the President and he knows an English lord and a real stage-manager."

"Don't he know anybody bigger'n them?" asked the man in a scornful way.

"Why, the stage-manager is the biggest man I ever saw," said Glenda.

"Ever hear him speak of Prince Biffkins?" said the man.

"I don't believe I ever did," said Glenda politely.

"You've heard of Prince Biffkins, though, haven't you?"

"I'm afraid I haven't," stammered Glenda.

"And you go to school?"

"In the winter—yes, I do," said Glenda, getting very red. "What is Prince Biffkins prince of?"

"Booloo Land," said the man.

He sat very quiet after that, and Glenda and I said, "Oh, yes," to show that we knew where Booloo Land was—though I'm ashamed to say we didn't.

"Booloo Land by-the-sea," the man went on in a dreamy voice. "Prince of Booloo Land, and now—look at me!"

We looked at him. There wasn't much to see—just a plain, everyday man with shiny clothes.

"Me, that was prince, has come to this," said the man. "A exile, a stranger in a strange land—that's what I am."

A sudden light flared up in Glenda and me. We gazed at each other, and then at the man, as if we saw him for the first time.

"Are you Prince Biffkins?" we asked, almost in a whisper.

"Of Booloo Land," said the man.

And then he took off his hat and bowed. "Prince Biffkins, of Booloo Land by-the-sea."

Glenda and I read each other's minds. We were both thinking, "And we asked him if he came to see the servants!" Our faces got like fire, and Glenda said:

"I hope you'll excuse me for thinking you wanted to see the servants. You see—I didn't—that is——"

"Lord, that's all right," said the man. "Ain't it what I meet with every day? It's the same everywhere—insult and abuse and nothing more. Do people know I'm Prince Biffkins? No! And why! 'Cause they expect a prince to wear silk clothes. And my silk clothes is all in Booloo Land."

"I think your clothes are very nice," said Glenda. But they weren't; she only said it to please him.

"I'm a exile," said the man, "a exile and a wanderer; but in my own land, d'you suppose I'd be like this—d'you suppose I'd be wearing things like these? . . . But I don't cherish hard feelings; if people knew who I was it would be different. They don't know I'm Prince Biffkins."

"We know you are Prince Biffkins," said Glenda and I together.

"That's white of you to say it, but what can you do for me? No, I'm just a exile—a poor, hopeless exile—of blood royal."

Glenda's face had been growing pinker and pinker, and now she stammered out:

"Papa isn't home, but if you'll let me help you——"

"Could you give me a night's lodging?" said the prince. He said it so quickly and eagerly it made us jump.

"Everything is dreadfully upset,"—Glenda was redder than a rose—"but if you think you could be comfortable we'd love to have you stay; we'd do all we could to make you happy. But I'm afraid it won't be like your own palace."

"That's all right," said the man; "it's been so long since I slept in a palace I've most forgot palace ways."

"If mama was only home," said Glenda. "Somehow, everything seems neater and nicer when mama's home."

"It's just as well mama ain't home. You see, I don't want to let on who I am to too many people. Us princes can't do like other folks. You are nice little girls, and I'll take that lodgin'. Put me up anywhere, just so it's cool. You haven't got a dog, have you?"

"No," said Glenda. "Do you like dogs? We might get——"

"No," said the man, "don't bother. I hate to put people to trouble. I'll worry along without a dog, somehow."

Then Glenda asked the prince to come in, and we all walked to the door. We weren't sure whether we ought to go ahead and walk backward or not, but he didn't seem to expect it, so we didn't. At the door the prince stopped suddenly.

"Look here, what you goin' to tell those girls of yours?"

"What girls?" said Glenda.

"Your help."

"Oh," said Glenda, "you mean the maids. Why, I'm going to tell them that you're Prince Biffkins."

The prince knit his brows.

"No," he said, "I'm afraid it won't do. Tell 'em I'm your cousin."

"But you are not my cousin," said Glenda.

The prince looked disappointed. "Oh, well, tell 'em I'm Prince Biffkins," he said.

We led the prince into the parlor and asked him to wait there for a little while till we saw about his room. We were awfully mortified at the parlor. There were paper dolls and books all

over the floor and dust an inch thick, because Betty had said dusting made her back ache. We apologized for it and said we hoped he would try to overlook it, and he said he would. He was very polite, the prince was. Sometimes he did queer things and he certainly did talk oddly, but then he was a-foreigner, you see, and you can't expect foreigners to do what you do.

Well, after we left the prince in the parlor we went out in the hall and fell into each other's arms.

"A prince!" said Glenda.

"A real, live prince," I said, and we giggled for joy; but suddenly our faces grew serious. We felt the responsibility of our position. Ours was no ordinary guest; we would have much to do to make his stay pleasant. We called Betty.

"Betty," Glenda said, "Prince Biffkins is here, and he's going to pay us a visit."

"Prince which?" said Betty.

"Biffkins," said Glenda, "and you must fix mama's room for him, because it's the prettiest, and courtesy when you speak to him—and, oh, Betty, I wish you had dusted the parlor!"

"Which is that, that's comin'?" said Betty. And we had to tell her everything all over again.

Well, if I do say it, Mrs. Wilderson's room after we got through with it was worthy of any prince. It is a lovely room, anyway, with beautiful, blue, satiny paper and a big brass bed and dark mahogany chairs and a dear little inlaid table. We had Betty make the bed, and for a wonder she didn't grumble. You see, she realized the seriousness of having a prince in the house, too. We put the best hem-stitched sheets on the bed and Mrs. Wilderson's new blankets that had never been used, and the dotted Swiss bed-cover over blue silk. Then Glenda cut all the flowers on the place and heaped them everywhere about the room. It smelled like a garden. Mrs. Wilderson had taken all her silver toilet things with her, so Glenda brought hers and spread them out on the toilet-

table. I wanted to give up something to the prince, too, so I looked through my trunk and found some violet water and a box of baby powder.

Then we went down to the parlor to call the prince. He wasn't there, but when he heard us he came hurrying in.

"I'm learning my ways round," he said; "I always learn my ways round when I get to a strange castle. This here ain't quite like the castles I've been accustomed to. Maybe you'd show me round." So we showed him round.

We had a lovely dinner that night. The table looked *sweet*! We got out all the silver and the cut-glass and Mrs. Wilderson's pond-lily centrepiece that she never uses, it's so beautiful. The prince sat at Glenda's right and I sat across from him, and we all had on our best clothes and looked lovely; that is, all but the prince. You see, his nice clothes were home in Booloo Land. But we were very polite and didn't notice that his coat was ripped and that he hadn't any cuffs.

The prince acted rather queer at first. He kept looking round the room in an odd, jerky way, as if he expected something to happen. Then, once, when a door banged, he jumped right up and said—but I won't say what he said; it was *awful*. The prince explained afterward. He said it wasn't what we thought; that in Booloo it meant something entirely different and not anywhere near as bad. However, after the soup had gone and the roast beef come in, he seemed to feel happier and began to take an interest in what he ate. In fact, he took the most interest of anyone I ever saw. It was wonderful.

Then, at dessert, Glenda remembered something and jumped up and came back with some of her father's claret. Glenda said that she knew it was awfully old, because she had heard her father say so, and she was terribly sorry they hadn't any better. The prince replied gallantly that it didn't make a particle of difference. And it didn't seem to. He drank it all.

After dinner he asked where Glen-

da's papa kept his wines, and Glenda showed him the little cupboard in Mr. Wilderson's study and where he kept the key. We left him alone in the study after that, because I have heard my parents say you oughtn't to force yourself upon a guest. The prince was awfully red in the face when we got back, and he didn't seem to speak English as well as he had before. He got quite excited, too, and waved his arms around and talked about the dog's life he led and how no one showed a man in his profession any consideration, and then he almost cried when he told us how good we had been to him and how much he liked us. Finally, at ten o'clock, we showed him to his room, and the last thing we saw of him that night he was sprawled across the dotted Swiss and blue silk bed-cover with all his clothes on, sound asleep.

"Miss Glenda," said Betty the next morning, "how long is that hungry loafer goin' to stay here?"

Glenda and I were eating breakfast—the prince was still asleep—and Glenda turned a terrible face on Betty.

"Betty," she said, "don't you dare to call Prince Biffkins that again."

"Prince Sniffkins—nothin'!" said Betty. "He ain't no prince, and Muriel, she says so too."

"He is a prince," said Glenda. "Leave the room, Betty."

"And I'm thinkin' that I ought to write to your mama as how a common tramp-man is sleepin' in her bed," said Betty.

"Leave the room, Betty," said Glenda.

"And eatin' her victuals," said Betty.

"Leave the— Oh, Betty, please don't!" said Glenda, almost crying. "If you tell her *stories* about the prince, of course she'll object."

"I'm thinkin' that I'll write to her," said Betty stubbornly.

An inspiration came to Glenda. "If you do," she said, "I'll write her and tell about your parties and your beaux!"

Betty sort of flopped into herself at that.

"I was only foolin'," she said. "I ain't goin' to write to your mama. Shall I go wake the duke?"

"Yes, you may wake him," said Glenda.

We went on with breakfast and had got as far as our third cup of chocolate when Betty came running in, white as a sheet.

"He's gone!" she cried.

"Who's gone?"

"That rapsallion—the prince!"

We tore upstairs. We couldn't believe it. I felt the way I did when I broke my first doll, and Glenda felt the same way. We simply couldn't *bear* to believe our prince had gone. But he had. There wasn't a sign of him—at least there were a good many signs, for the room was terribly tumbled, but there was no prince.

"What could we have done?" Glenda cried, and we racked our brains. We were so afraid we had offended him.

"It was that claret," I said at last; "you know it *was* old."

Glenda nodded. She was too full of tears to speak.

Just then I saw something on the little desk by the window. It was a piece of Mrs. Wilderson's monogrammed notepaper scrawled all over in a shaky, raggedy hand. Glenda saw it, too.

"You may go, Betty," said Glenda, and Betty went out moaning and saying something about a thief. She was a queer girl, Betty. You'd have thought she would be thinking of no one but the prince at a time like that. Glenda and I opened the letter and with our heads together read:

TO THE TWO LITTLE KIDS:

this is to say that i am forced to leve in a hurry cause i got a wireless Tellygram that my Affairs in booloo Land needed me bad and i didnt want to wake you so i stole out easy i seed the Jim Cranks on the buro was marked glenda so i didnt bother em You was as prety behaved Kids as I ever seed and its a Dern shame but that aint bizness If you ever come to booloo Land i will entertane you royal same as you did Me i thanks you sinsear for your hospitalty as i have reeson to beleive i will live high in Future

yours respectfull

BIFKINS OF BOOLOO

It was really a beautiful letter, we thought, all except the spelling and the writing and blots and finger-marks and punctuation, but the thoughts were beautiful. We were so relieved to know it had been business and not the claret or anything we had done that had sent him away, and we were so glad that he had gone to be a prince again that we felt almost happy, even though we had lost him. We were still reading the letter when Betty came tearing in.

She said all the silver had gone except the breakfast things she had left in the kitchen overnight, and all Mrs. Wilderson's jewelry and the ornaments in the parlor, and Mr. Wilderson's clothes, and the cut-glass, and— But perhaps it would be easier to tell what *hadn't* gone. The parlor clock hadn't gone, and the kitchen chairs and an old rake.

We were horrified. To think a burglar had been in the house and we hadn't known it! Glenda grew very white and I sat down hard on the prince's bed. We simply couldn't speak for awhile; then at last Glenda opened her lips.

"If the prince had only not gone," said Glenda.

"Huh?" said Betty.

"He'd have killed the burglar!" cried Glenda.

Then Betty said a terrible thing.

"Don't you know *yet* who stole everything? Don't you know it was that lyin' king? What'd he skip for?"

We said we could tell her, and showed her the letter. But do you know the stupid girl persisted in her foolish theory? However, she was only a servant, and it didn't matter. But that night, when Mr. and Mrs. Wilderson and all the family came home—we wrote for them—they *all thought what Betty thought!*

It seems incredible that such injustice could be in a Christian land. Here we had the prince's letter to *prove* it, and they yet refused to see. Those were cruel days—the cruellest in our young lives, perhaps. All Brown-town rang with the story of the prince and the robbery, and everyone held the poor prince responsible. For the first time we were ashamed of our native land.

The detective asked us to describe the prince, and when we did it and told him what lovely eyes the prince had and made the most we could of every feature, the detective said:

"Pete Larry, beyond a doubt, by George!"

Poor Prince Biffkins! We knew how his proud blood would boil could he hear himself confused with a common criminal.

The detectives tried to catch the prince, but they couldn't. How could they? Only we knew where he was, and you can just believe we didn't tell.

So finally the affair died down and Mrs. Wilderson stopped wailing about her jewels and her bed having been used by a burglar; and Mr. Wilderson got new clothes, and they gave a silver-shower and got jams of new silver, and Glenda and I were allowed to play together again.

We never forgot the prince. We have his letter still, all framed in a little gold frame. Napoleon's picture used to be in; and Glenda keeps it for one week and I keep it the next, and so on. We are proud to say we knew him, that poor, downtrodden, misunderstood but royal prince, and if he should ever come to the house again Glenda and I know exactly what we're going to do—first bow, the way they do to princes on the stage, and then open the door wide and ask him in.



CASPER—I hear that poor old Broadway fell off the water-wagon.
JUMPUPPE—Yes, but he fell so hard that he bounced up again.

ON THE HILLTOP

By Madison Cawein

I

THERE is no inspiration in the view.
 From where this acorn drops its thimbles brown
 The landscape stretches like a shaggy frown;
 The wrinkled hills hang haggard and harsh of hue;
 Above them hollows the heaven's stony blue,
 Like a dull thought that haunts some sleep-dazed clown
 Plodding his homeward way; and, whispering down,
 The dead leaves dance, a sear and shelterless crew.
 Let the sick day stagger unto its close,
 Sullen and mumbling, like a wretched crone
 Beneath her fagots—huddled fogs that soon
 Shall flare the windy west with ashen glows,
 Like some deep, dying hearth; and let the lone
 Night come at last—night, and its withered moon.

II

The wind is rising and the leaves are swept
 Wildly before it; hundreds on hundreds fall
 Huddling beneath the trees; with brag and brawl
 Of storm the day is grown a tavern, kept
 Of madness, where, with mantles torn and ripped
 Of flying leaves that beat above it all,
 The wild winds fight; and, like some half-spent ball,
 The acorn stings the rout; and, silver-stripped,
 The milkweed-pod winks an exhausted lamp.
 Now, in his coat of tatters dark that streams,
 The ragged rain sweeps stormily this way,
 With all his clamorous followers—clouds that camp
 Around the hearthstone of the west, where gleams
 The last chill flame of the expiring day.



THE TYRANT DETHRONED

MRS. GRAMERCY—Are you glad the cook is going to leave?
 MRS. PARK—For one reason. I can now say to her the things I've
 been wishing to say ever since she's been here.

BESSIE AND MISS GREY

By W. J. B. Moses

OF course, if one had made up his mind—as Knowles seldom did—and if one were perfectly serious in his intentions and whole-heartedly devoted to their carrying out—as Knowles never was—one would not make love to Miss Grey in the same way that one would make love to Bessie. With Bessie one would look for moonlit nooks where hands might come into unintentional contact, and where in due time kisses and caresses might follow, as it were by accident, so naturally that they would excite no wonder and little thought, while sometimes a mutual declaration of love, in irrevocable words, would be borne in on a wave of passionate tenderness.

But with Miss Grey, no doubt the declaration must come before the kisses; and probably even then there would be little of passion or tenderness about them. In her case there would be presents of flowers and books, long and erudite conversations, polite little attentions distinguished by a delicate flavor of intimacy, a thorough canvassing of each other's tastes, ideals, theories of life—coming to a climax, perhaps, with those concerning love and marriage—and then a grave and serious statement of one's affection and a plain proposal of marriage. Once engaged, kisses would not be altogether out of the question, but the idea of kissing the calm, stately, well-bred young woman in the same way in which one would kiss brown-eyed Bessie was absurd. In the latter case the first kiss would demand an infinite repetition, while in the former one would do for a reasonable time.

Thinking something of this kind, but without naming Bessie definitely to himself, Knowles allowed the month of Miss Grey's residence to slip away without in any way becoming a confessed lover.

Never in his life had he been more contentedly happy than during the long hours of their intimate association—the days of luxuriant idleness in the woods, the evenings of quiet talk on Mrs. Sanford's porch, with neutral little Miss Clarence as a negligible chaperon. Yet with all their intellectual intimacy Knowles felt an impersonality in their relations that persisted to the day of her departure, and deterred him subtly from any show of the interest he honestly felt in the real woman.

In the reaction from his disappointment and loneliness, Bessie, not the less ready for a little attention because she had been so completely ignored, fell under his notice, and he found excuses for being frequently in her company. He did not see her every day, as he had seen Miss Grey for the last two weeks of her stay, but he began to form the habit of taking his Sunday afternoon stroll in the direction of the Mason cottage.

Sometimes he sat on the lawn and talked to the little girl, sometimes walked with her along the wooded shore of Lake Winona, or, if the weather were not suitable, sat in the "parlor," and looked patiently at the photographs which Mrs. Mason showed him. Then he would recompense himself for that trial by a two hours' contemplation of Bessie's charms.

Mrs. Mason was rather too cordial in welcoming these weekly calls—

so cordial that Knowles rather disliked her; but he felt at the same time that Bessie, though she seemed glad to see him, as a rule was not to be accused of unmaidenly boldness in seeking to attract him.

On that Sunday when Mrs. Sanford informed him of Miss Grey's return, he thought for a time that he would not go to see Bessie. But the anticipation of Miss Grey's coming, combined with the lack of customary occupation, made him so restless that he did go at last and invited the young girl to walk with him. The walk was not a very interesting one, for Knowles was very silent and preoccupied.

They found a mossy bank on the edge of the lake and spent more than an hour there, Bessie, for the most part, looking at her shoes, and Knowles looking sometimes at her, sometimes out across the lake.

He was almost certain in his own mind that Bessie loved him, and that certainty disturbed him. He thought she would have been glad if he had seated himself close beside her and put his arm about her. This he was determined not to do, and though he restrained himself he placed no bonds on his imagination, but allowed it to present such a course of action in its most enticing colors.

When at last it came time to go, Knowles was still sitting apart from Bessie, wondering if he were not a fool for not improving his chance of kissing those pretty red lips, and then lauding himself for that strength of character which kept him from yielding to what he considered a temptation. Once away from Bessie he felt very well satisfied with himself. He knew that he could meet Miss Grey the next afternoon with a clear conscience and a sense of triumphant virtue.

Restless as ever that evening, he went for another walk by the lakeside, alone, and stumbled accidentally upon a pair of lovers. They were both youthful this time, and before Knowles could make his presence known he found that the girl was Bessie and

that she and the boy with her were talking about him.

They were walking toward him, and he thought it would be kinder to step into the shadow and let them pass by. Instead of passing, however, they stopped within arm's reach of him.

Then Knowles learned several things not altogether complimentary to himself. It was rather a shock at first, but before Bessie and the boy were ready to go and give him an opportunity to escape, he had managed to reconcile himself to the fact that Bessie considered him very slow, stupid and troublesome; that she was polite to him only because her mother desired it; that she hated him and hoped she would never see him again. And even more she confessed, urged on by the jealous questioning of the boy.

In the meantime, the electric atmosphere of love was perceptible in the air, and the youthful couple billed and cooed with an abandon that was rather disgusting to the unwilling witness. He was philosopher enough to submit gracefully to this rude awakening, and since Miss Grey was coming it was perhaps rather a relief to feel himself free from all responsibility in Bessie's case.

The next day he saw Miss Grey. She greeted him most cordially and as if she had been looking forward to seeing him quite as much as Mrs. Sanford herself.

Almost at once relations were established on the footing of the previous summer, except that there was now no Miss Clarence to make a third in their rambles. Knowles had felt some hesitation at first as to whether Miss Grey would not think it improper to wander about the woodland and lake shore unchaperoned, but she seemed to see nothing unusual in it; and although he had been prepared to bribe Mrs. Sanford into taking the place of Miss Clarence, had that been necessary, he saw no reason to suggest such a course.

In the beginning he was pleased

with this state of affairs; then he began to realize that in not objecting to these solitary rambles Miss Grey was proving somewhat different from the Miss Grey who had won his worship because she was a woman of the highest ideals and strictest, sternest code of life.

And yet, after all, it was nothing. But again he had begun to feel a little less afraid of Miss Grey's opinion of things. At first he had been careful about disagreeing with her, for he felt unformed and uninformed by her side. He wore his knowledge as he wore his clothes, in a rather ungainly manner, while she, in this respect, displayed that refinement of taste which is doubly commendable in a woman. Always aware of his own carelessness in matters of detail, and always fearful lest the more precise-minded should think meanly of his ability, he was invariably diffident before people of culture. So he had felt with Miss Grey. But now he saw that in many things he had little to fear. Her knowledge of German and French was far greater than his, it is true, but he could read these languages with a facility that was marvelous in her eyes. He was an indifferent student of Italian, Spanish, Danish and Bohemian—languages with which she was almost wholly unacquainted. She knew what it was necessary to know concerning art and music, and could carry on a drawing-room conversation very well; but when it came to any deeper survey of such subjects she was confessedly not very competent. Philosophy and literature she was better prepared to discuss, but in these, too, Knowles found that he was her superior.

Because she knew what she should know, and because she had the *savoir faire* which Knowles so noticeably lacked, he had been inclined, at first, to creep before her; but as he came to understand more perfectly all the crooks and turnings of her mind and all the limits of her knowledge and of her intellect, he began to stand upright, to increase in stature, to look down upon her.

But it was not until about a week before the time set for her departure that the more rapid descent of this ideal woman began. They had been walking in the woods and had sat down upon a log to rest. In seating himself Knowles's hand fell, absolutely without intention on his part, in such a way that it rested upon the log in close contact with Miss Grey's fingers. And she did not move.

Although he had begun to think less of her intellect, no suspicion that he had been mistaken in his estimate of her standard of propriety had crossed his mind; but now, advancing from that first contact of hands to other caresses, he found with something of a shock that Miss Grey was susceptible to the kind of love-making that he had formerly associated with his thoughts of Bessie.

Once the ice was broken they babbled along brightly for a time, exchanging kisses and gentle caresses with as good grace as if they had been fifteen instead of thirty; but all the time Knowles was thinking strange thoughts. Had she taken his actions as a serious declaration of love? Was he not now bound to make a verbal proposal of marriage? Did she not consider it an engagement already? He did not believe that she had ever allowed another man to kiss her in that way. Although she was far older than Bessie, he felt certain that she loved him with the unselfishness and purity of a young girl's first ardor. And he did not believe that he himself really did love her at all, now.

The few remaining days passed swiftly away without a change in the cordiality of the relations between them and without one definite word of love-making. If Miss Grey was disturbed because Knowles had failed to speak she did not betray the fact. Perhaps she trusted that the mutual caresses were sufficient proposal and sufficient acceptance.

Then came the morning that she was to leave. Knowles drove his trap out from the village and took her to

the station. At sheltered places on the road he did not hesitate to exchange kisses with her, but he said nothing which might commit him.

After he had procured her ticket and seen to her baggage, they walked slowly up and down the platform together, threading their way between the trunks and boxes and the groups of traveling men, draymen, barefoot boys and other loungers, talking very little and about indifferent subjects only.

Knowles was still debating with himself whether he should ask her to marry him, or if not that, whether he should say something about writing to her when the distance should separate them. He came to no conclusion. The smoke of the incoming train was seen. There was the usual bustle and running to and fro, seizing of hand-bags and crowding toward the edge of the platform.

The train whistled. Knowles and Miss Grey joined the waiting crowd in silence. He held in his hand her umbrella and bag. The train came rushing in and stopped. Passengers crowded off, pushing back those who wished to get aboard. There was a confused sound of greeting, and a clamor of the bus-drivers and hotel runners.

"Now, then," said the brakeman, as the last passenger descended, allowing the impatient traveling men to climb aboard.

Knowles and Miss Grey were the last of the crowd. He helped her aboard, found her chair for her and turned to meet her eyes, still only half decided in favor of silence. So far she had shown no trace of emotion

that he could discover, but all at once she seemed to break down. She placed a trembling hand on his arm as he bent over the seat. Her quiet blue eyes were brimming with slow tears.

"All aboard!" cried the conductor, and the train began to move almost imperceptibly.

"I think you have been very cruel to me," she whispered.

"Good-bye!" he said, conscious chiefly of the rapidly increasing movement of the train. He rushed through the aisle and jumped from the car just in time not to miss the platform.

For a moment he stood, collecting his thoughts; then, with sudden resolution, he hurried into the office and asked for a telegraph blank. He scribbled rapidly and handed the message to the sour-visaged, one-armed agent. It read:

For Miss Grey, Parlor Car, Train 3. Will you marry me?

KNOWLES.

As the agent ticked off the message, Knowles walked savagely about the room, which was now vacant. He knew it would be from twenty minutes to half an hour that he must wait. All the time he paced restlessly back and forth.

At last the taciturn agent came to the window and beckoned. Knowles looked eagerly at the man for some token that would tell him the nature of the reply, but he saw no shadow of expression or interest. He tore open the yellow envelope which was handed him and read:

MR. CLEMENT KNOWLES: No.

MARGARET GREY.



THE OTHERS DECLINED

MADGE—I wonder why Charlie said I was not like other girls?
MARJORIE—He said that because you had accepted him.

THE MOTOR ADVENTURES OF LADY SIBYL

BEING AN IDYL OF SAINT SYROL'S DAY

By Zona Gale

LORD BURKELY CHEVELTON and his wife, Lady Mary, never knew all the story. And in Burkely Manor House, in Sussex, the portrait of Lady Sibyl, their eldest daughter, adorns a row of patrician ladies of Chevelton, to whom the affair would have been manifestly impossible. But the ladies of Chevelton were not so fortunate as to spend any autumn of their well-ordered lives in America on Long Island, in the neighborhood of Wolstanbury Hill.

Lady Sibyl was twenty-four when it happened, although she was only just at the end of her first London season; for a year of mourning for her brother and two years on the Continent in search of Lady Mary's health, and a year in India as the guest of the wife of the viceroy had fallen in admirably with a natural aversion to the occupation of a season in town.

"Not that Sibyl is not frivolous," Lord Burkely Chevelton was wont to muse defensively. "Sibyl is finely frivolous. But she dislikes frivolity as a profession. I'm afraid she will never marry."

The irrelevancy of his last clause bade fair to be both justified and discounted, however, when shortly after Lady Sibyl had been presented, the young Marquis of Winnesdale paid ardent court to her. The young marquis was penniless, none too settled in demeanor and an undoubted genius in oils, and the Cheveltons were in a panic—all but Lady Sibyl. She was amused and she was frankly kind to the marquis. She was not, however, so perfectly amused as to resent a suspi-

ciously timely invitation from her sister Pamela to spend that autumn with her in America. If she secretly smiled at Lady Mary's sudden certainty that Pamela needed her, she made no comment; indeed, since the runaway marriage of Pamela, Lord Chevelton's second daughter, with Harvey Queenborough, the young American millionaire whose sole disqualification was that he was the flower of no great family-tree, Lady Sibyl had been eager to visit her sister, so that the project was a welcome one.

Early, therefore, in a peculiarly amber-and-russet October, Lady Sibyl Chevelton set foot on American soil, and the day after her arrival she was deep in a bewildering survey of her sister's Long Island country place. She looked with frank amazement at the great stone palace, the bountiful acres, the woods, the rose gardens, the stables and kennels of the Queenborough domain, and she uttered her abiding decision.

"Pamela," she said gravely, "England is heaven, but this is Nirvana. Already I feel the fine independence of the dead."

Harvey Queenborough looked in duty bound to take offense.

"Don't bandy words," begged Lady Sibyl in her rich voice, half contralto, half accent; "I could have found it in my heart to die daily to find liberty. The only place that an unmarried Englishwoman can occupy without a chap-eron is the grave. But here I find a premature independence in America. Rejoice with me!"

A week after her arrival Lady Sibyl

was walking one evening on the terrace, looking so like the conventional princess that Harvey Queenborough, as he joined her, pleasantly called her a cartoon. Her white frock was trailing; Rex, the longest and leanest of the greyhounds, was lounging beside her, and the peacocks were crying discordantly at her approach.

"No," replied Lady Sibyl, "I would not have been a terrace-and-turret kind of princess, with a white peacock in every room. I would have been a hunting princess, with doublet and hose and a green cloak."

"And what would you have hunted?" demanded Pamela, with a matronly hand on the skirts of two little Queenboroughs who balanced on the edge of the fountain. "A good golf course, to judge by your present tastes."

Little Mrs. Queenborough was twenty-two, and she deliciously embodied the superiority of all young wifehood, in proof of which she had developed a fascinating line between her eyes.

Lady Sibyl shook her head. "No," she said, "something—I don't know—something I've never had. There must be something in the world for women—our kind of women—that we never get. We all want it—it's the thing we dreamed about when we were eighteen. I can't remember what it was, and you can't. What was it?"

There was one guest at Queenborough Place that evening; he sat throwing sticks at the frogs in the fountain and listening with a little crooked smile that threw his features delightfully out of proportion. Mr. Headly Madder was above forty, without occupation, and he was a privileged person, which always means that people are privileged good-naturedly to browbeat one as much as they please. He looked up quietly now.

"I know," he said to Lady Sibyl.

"You know?" she repeated incredulously. "What I dreamed about when I was eighteen?"

"Headly has made everything a study," said Pamela. "He prescribes for Rex and recommends sunshades to me with the same unfailing instinct."

"You see," explained Mr. Madder imperturbably, "you constantly want something incongruous. Women love to breathe the atmosphere of another age. That's what makes them love romance—for romance is only an echo of King Arthur and mythology; in other words, a survival of what never was."

Queenborough laughed immoderately. "Bachelor," he commented, "oh, bachelor!"

"That is exactly why women like to be athletic," went on Mr. Madder. "The incongruity of a perfectly matter-of-fact woman getting out and grotesquely chasing a ball over a course or a net pleases their sense of the fantastic. And it isn't motoring that delights them—it is the spectacle of a big red car that Nero or Justinian might have ridden in, buzzing through crowds of lesser folk who are concerned with commonplace pursuits. Women of imagination are creatures of all time, Lady Sibyl, and, being fallen by accident upon the evil days of the twentieth century, their chief concern is to get away. So they spend life in pretending, and they dream or motor or lecture as their temperament demands."

Lady Sibyl leaned against a moon-dial set near the fountain so that its faint shadow should be cast on the starry water. About its edge grew a tangle of late blossoms; she held up one of the pallid flowers with wind-torn edges and fastened it in her hair.

"At this moment," she admitted, "I would like to be a mermaid, with a bonnet of water-flowers. What would you suggest?" She put it to Mr. Madder with sudden seriousness.

He shook his head, looking at Lady Sibyl in delight. She was like one of the lesser angels when she asked for advice.

"I don't know," he confessed ruefully, "but if I were a woman, I'd find a way."

"You disappoint me," pouted Lady Sibyl; "women are always being decorated with generalizations instead of fed with suggestions. Why don't you tell me to go and put bubbles in my

hair and dance in the south wood all night? You aren't practical."

Queenborough rose. "Pamela," he said, with mock severity, "who is this Lady Sibyl whom you are passing as your sister?—for anyone less like the accepted British maid I have never seen."

"I must be like her, though," said Lady Sibyl gloomily, "or I'd rebel. We're all alike. We've all forgotten what we used to dream at eighteen."

Pamela, idling toward the house with a sleepy little Queenborough on either side, smiled over her shoulder.

"Don't mind her, Headly," she said. "Sibyl is the most conventional creature alive, really. She never leaves an obligation to a bore unpaid."

"That is the kind," opined Mr. Madder shrewdly, "in whose hearts you'll find the biggest revolt going on. The women who concede the most to society are the ones who most long to 'get away.'"

"Then they are only rag-doll rebels," said Lady Sibyl, "or some time they would—'get away.'"

A little while later Queenborough, with an air of restrained triumph, walked into the drawing-room where they were assembled.

"The new car has come," he announced.

"Really, Harvey?" cried Pamela delightedly. "Are the cushions the right shade?"

Her husband's bright smile vanished. "After three years of matrimony," he said, "I have succeeded in inducing Pamela not to judge a horse by the jockey's shirt, or a golf-player by the cut of his knickerbockers. But her one idea of an auto is still the color of the cushions. Will you all come for a day's run tomorrow?" he finished. "I'll take a holiday. Pamela, we'll take the children. Headly, you know you will? And it shall be Lady Sibyl's party."

Mr. Madder shook his head.

"The Windmeres ride tomorrow," he said.

"I'd forgotten," said Queenborough. "The Bruce and Medora are still lame,

and Lady Sibyl's mare hasn't arrived yet. That's the greater reason for our drowning our sorrow in Westchester County, as a family."

"Oh, Harvey," mourned Pamela, "the Cross-country Needlework Guild meets here tomorrow, and I've got to give them luncheon. Wait till next day."

"Directors' meeting that day," said her husband. "No, it will have to be tomorrow. Lady Sibyl, will you go?"

Lady Sibyl did not at once answer. The evening papers lay in her lap, and her eye had been caught by a certain name in the passenger list of the *Ten-tonic*.

"Other arrivals," the paragraph ran, "were the members of the Forestry Commission and the Marquis of Winnesdale, whose pictures at the Academy," etc.

"Oh," said Lady Sibyl suddenly, "I'm so glad!"

"I thought you'd be," said Queenborough genially; and then, as she looked up startled, he added: "You shall run the car yourself, because you're company."

"Really!" cried Lady Sibyl, and her sudden animation was most gratifying to Queenborough.

"Poor Mr. Madder," said Pamela, noticing nothing, "that's what you get for being M.F.H., you see."

"You'll have a great day of it," consented Mr. Madder, his eyes following Lady Sibyl admiringly as she went to the piano.

Lady Sibyl struck the first wild, disjointed chord of "Peer Gynt" and wheeled suddenly on the stool. It was not so much, she should have admitted, that the Earl of Winnesdale had actually arrived as that his caring to come was somehow a new element in her new freedom.

"This isn't London, this isn't London," sang Lady Sibyl rejoicingly, like a child. "Oh, what a lot of the world there is that isn't London!"

When Queenborough came to his wife's sitting-room that night to share the little supper that was invariably

spread for them, Pamela confided an anxiety.

"Harvey," she said, "you know that legend in our family that one of its women disappears every generation?"

"Yes," said Queenborough, lighting the alcohol lamp, "and don't you attempt it."

"There was Lady Geraldine," went on Pamela, "who disappeared from the ball the night before Waterloo; and Lady Fens, who was never seen after somebody's coronation ball. Harvey, I sometimes think that Sibyl——"

"Nonsense," said Queenborough lightly.

"Well, you heard what she said about putting bubbles in her hair and dancing in the south wood," said Pamela.

"My dear Pamela," cried Queenborough, "you'd far better send that Cross-country Needlework Guild packing tomorrow, and come with us. You need a change!"

"I can perfectly imagine her doing it, anyway," said Pamela, with determination.

It was not yet ten o'clock when Lady Sibyl, clad in a long gray coat that might never disown its Parisian birth, stepped out on the terrace in answer to the splendid, throaty greeting of the new car. On her head she wore no cap at all, but a great white veil covered her face and hair and was tied in an enormous bow beneath her chin.

Queenborough raised his eyebrows. "Didn't Pamela's cap do?" he inquired tentatively.

"We don't wear them," disclaimed Lady Sibyl simply. "It's in the by-laws of our country club. Only veils—and you've no idea how much better it is, or you'd adopt it."

"But you'll have to go the whole length of Fifth avenue and the Park," suggested Pamela doubtfully.

"Delightful!" replied Lady Sibyl evenly as Queenborough handed her in.

The new car was a signal success. The run to Long Island City in the fresh autumn morning, with Lady

Sibyl guiding the machine, was accomplished gratifyingly clear of the old record, and they dashed on the ferry as the bell sounded, and sat with tingling cheeks over which the full-scented fall winds had been rushing. On the New York side, at his station by the cross-town car terminals, stood Queenborough's office-boy, morning mail in hand, patiently waiting, as usual, to take the car to the garage while Queenborough went downtown on the Elevated.

Tibby, the boy, was that type of metropolitan, Bowery-born and office-bred, who has become man-about-town and citizen of the world, and who knows his New York as he knows his ball-score, while curiously retaining a certain childlikeness of manner and an unmistakable Bowery accent. But Tibby, besides all this, was a delicate little lad, with great eyes, who was given to hanging out the window by the water-cooler when his colleagues were betting pennies at the ticker. Lady Sibyl watched him compassionately as, in response to Queenborough's nod, he clambered into the tonneau and waited, his big eyes patiently fixed on the Elevated track. Queenborough recalled her by a sudden exclamation.

"By Jove," he said, "this is too bad. Special meeting of the board at noon today—and I can't get out of going. Why the deuce didn't they wire me?" he asked irritably.

"Did, sir," said Tibby briefly; "hour ago."

Queenborough thought a moment, looking perplexedly at Lady Sibyl, hatless, with her great veil.

"You can't go home by train alone in those togs," he said decidedly. "Look here, you shall not lose your run, Lady Sibyl, that's all there is about it. I'll telephone my chauffeur. Tibby, you may run the car up to the stable as usual, and Charles will take it on up the country and then back home. No use to wait for me—I can't tell when I shall be free. Do you mind, Lady Sibyl?"

Suspicion of a faint sparkle lighted Lady Sibyl's eyes as she threw deep

regret into her reply that she did not mind.

"May I keep the boy with me, too?" she asked on a sudden impulse.

"Why, if you would feel safer," assented Queenborough.

Lady Sibyl noted the fire of hope and gratitude in the lad's eyes.

So it was arranged. Queenborough took the Elevated, with a regretful backward look at his new toy, and Lady Sibyl set off on her journey with Tibby at the helm. Just before they reached Fifth avenue they passed a fruit-stand, and at her command the lad willingly got down and returned with both hands laden.

"Now," commanded Lady Sibyl quietly, "you may sit in the tonneau; I shall run the machine the rest of the way."

Tibby regarded her for a moment with uncertain eyes. But as the great machine obeyed her hand and rounded the corner, and threaded its unwavering way up the crowded Avenue, he doubted no longer, and his respect for Lady Sibyl became monumental. After all, he reflected, it was only a few blocks up to the garage, in Forty-third street, where Queenborough's chauffeur would await them.

The slim gray figure, with its distinctive head-covering, attracted considerable attention as the car puffed up the Avenue. No one recognized the new motor as Queenborough's; few had seen Lady Sibyl before. By the time Lady Sibyl and her one little passenger reached Forty-third street a trail of conjecture, of which she was supremely unconscious, was drifting behind her.

"Nex' corner to de left is de stable," volunteered Tibby.

Lady Sibyl, with her eye undeviatingly on the course, spoke in an even voice.

"Perhaps I ought to tell you," she said, "that I don't intend going to the stable at all. I wish to make the run alone. I shall go up the Avenue and through the Park, and after that you will direct the course, please, to some inn where we can lunch."

Tibby stared uncomprehendingly at the erect, girlish figure that had already sped the car well beyond the street of the stables.

"But Mr. Queenborough, ma'am—" began Tibby, aghast.

"Mr. Queenborough would wish you to do as I say, Tibby," Lady Sibyl reminded him pleasantly.

A slow grin overspread the boy's face, and he said something under his breath which the car drowned.

Into the golden wilderness of the Park they plunged presently, and then Lady Sibyl drew breath. She was now fairly embarked upon her enterprise, and the long day stretched invitingly before her. It was not yet noon, this whole alien world of which she had suddenly become a part was smiling and singing about her, the hoarse call of every passing motor was like a greeting and a challenge, and here was she, Sibyl Chevelton, roving at large in America, accompanied only by a smiling boy bribed to doubtful acquiescence by chestnuts and apples. Besides, though the item was not given official recognition in her mind, there was undoubtedly the pleasantly exciting memory of the *Teutonic's* passenger list.

"Hully gee!" said Tibby ecstatically, "don't it smell good?"

And "Oh, this," thought Lady Sibyl a little wistfully, "is almost like what I used to dream about when I was eighteen. Perhaps, if I go far enough, I shall meet my dream!"

II

THE open road which, after half an hour's progress, Tibby indicated, showed a bewildering length of colored branches and fair shadows. Some laborers in a field were whistling briskly, a thin cloud or two was driven lightly abroad by the crisp wind that broke over Lady Sibyl's face, bringing scent of unseen presses and far bonfires.

Presently the road dipped past a high orchard wall, and from a gate in

the wall, set just opposite an alluring branch road of haze and red leaves, there suddenly emerged a grotesque little figure which the car, though dexterously avoiding, evidently threw into a panic. She was a plump little old lady, with ruddy face and bobbing curls and a pudgy reticule, and she shrank aside in such helpless terror that Lady Sibyl impulsively brought the car to a stop and looked back. She saw the little old lady sitting weakly by the roadside, mechanically straightening her bonnet. Instantly Lady Sibyl sprang to the ground and, followed closely by Tibby, hurried back to her. To their surprise, upon their approach and before they could speak, the old lady looked up gravely and addressed them.

"Do you happen to know," she said, with some severity, "whether there is a wood near here where one could get lost?"

One advantage in being the daughter of a hundred earls is that one is natively able to meet them all, walking ghostly with their coffin shoes in their hands, and betray no great surprise. Perhaps, too, it was that the wine of the morning was running in Lady Sibyl's veins so that, as it always is with a happy few, nothing delightful seemed unreal.

Lady Sibyl looked about her. "A wood to get lost in!" she repeated musingly.

"Yes, indeed. What else?" demanded the old lady crossly. "Our Lady knows that this is the first holiday I have had in twenty years, and I mean to get lost as far as ever I can. I've cakes enough with me."

Lady Sibyl considered, frowning regretfully at her helplessness. It was a part of her code to give assistance without question of values; she would no more have questioned the old lady's reasons for getting lost than have inquired the errand itself of a more commonplace seeker.

"I'm afraid I *don't* know," she said at last apologetically, and then she remembered Tibby, who stood by, staring.

"Tibby," she said briskly, "you know the road. Can you suggest a wood where this lady can get lost?"

A long and checkered office career had made of Tibby as stern a thoroughbred as could any ancestry. Like a cab-driver and a man of the world, Tibby seldom showed amazement. His defection at the moment of Lady Sibyl's capture of the car was long a source of mortal chagrin.

"Sure," he recommended briefly. "Lady Birch Grove. Two mile up. Solid woods from dere to Medford."

"For the love of heaven!" exclaimed the old lady irritably. "Two miles! I can't go so far. A body can't even get lost nowadays without money to travel."

"Oh," cried Lady Sibyl, brightening, "we'll take you. Will you come with us? We'll take you to the grove, if you like."

The old lady looked doubtfully at the car.

"I don't know but I might as well," she said musingly. "The Lord'll probably come in a bigger, noisier chariot than that. Our Lady knows I live to be prepared."

Lady Sibyl and Tibby helped the little creature to rise, settled her comfortably in the tonneau, and the journey was resumed. At once their passenger gave a brief account of herself.

"I've lived here," she said angrily, untying the ribbons of her reticule, "for forty years. Where else, I'd like to know? And in all that time they have never given me a holiday—not one. They thought I wouldn't notice, but I did. I kept count. And I remembered every day the way the woods smelled, and when it came bonfire time I wonder I didn't go crazy. And at last, this morning, when I found the mallowberries ripe, I took some cakes and went through the orchard. I want to be lost. It is never a real holiday until you're lost. Do you travel far?"

"We don't know," answered Lady Sibyl truthfully. "Some distance, probably. The truth is," she added mis-

chievously, "we're looking for a dream—the sort of dream we used to have."

Lady Sibyl glanced merrily at Tibby. To her delight his face was one substantial wreath of smiles, not derisive nor abashed, as a boy's smiles are wont to be, but plainly sympathetic. As for the little old lady, she nodded as simply as if Lady Sibyl had announced herself to be upon an expedition to purchase late pippins.

"Aye," she said comprehendingly, "but they're hard to find—the dreams we used to have."

Far from being alarmed by the swift flight of the car, the old lady was apparently soothed and so successfully that when Lady Sibyl next addressed her she was perplexed to find her fast asleep. So occupied was Lady Sibyl in wondering what to do when the Grove of the Lady Birches should at last be reached that she did not notice, until she was almost upon him, a man who advanced toward them, waving his cap to attract attention. Lady Sibyl touched the brake, and the car rolled to a standstill before him. He was a well-knit, square-shouldered, youngish man, whose face was boyish in spite of the tinge of gray at the temples, and the charm of his deference was very great.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "have you an extra tire-valve?" He indicated his own car in dry-dock under a linden just ahead.

Lady Sibyl appealed to Tibby with a glance.

"Search me, sir," said Tibby to the man; "we ain't been out wid dis car before. Wait awhile."

He climbed over the back of the seat, not to disturb the still slumbering guest, rummaged among the tools and emerged red-faced, while the man waited patiently and Lady Sibyl gazed tranquilly over the salt marshes.

"Nope," announced Tibby comprehensively. "Gimme a look at de wheel," he added, with importance.

Lady Sibyl glanced with some annoyance at the boy, but the gratitude of the stranger was evident, and when Tibby regretfully announced his ina-

bility to be of use without a new valve, the man bowed cheerfully to them both.

"I thought so," he said serenely. "I am greatly obliged."

Whereupon, with a reticently bestowed coin to Tibby and another charmingly impersonal bow to Lady Sibyl, he leaped into the shady tonneau of his own machine, took a book from his pocket and composedly opened it. Lady Sibyl, her hand on the lever, hesitated.

"What will he do?" she asked of Tibby in a low tone.

"Set still, I reckon," hazarded Tibby.

Lady Sibyl glanced at their sleeping guest, at the empty seat beside her and then at the young man, already absorbed in his book under the linden.

"I beg your pardon, sir," she said impulsively; "we would be very glad to set you down at the next village, where you can get help."

Lady Sibyl was abashed at her own audacity; yet it would have been both godly and modern for the Good Samaritan to have failed to distinguish in beneficiaries on the road to Jericho. The young man was on the ground in an instant, advancing to her side. He seemed, however, in no haste to avail himself of her suggestion.

"I don't know," he said doubtfully, scanning first the smiling sky, then the singing fields and then Lady Sibyl's pretty, grave face. "I really came out hoping for a break-down."

He was so engagingly grave that it was impossible to take him seriously.

"I wanted," he explained, "to enjoy the fields and the open road, and when I motor I see nothing but macadam and asphalt. I was really relieved at the accident. But I was obliged to satisfy my conscience by inquiring, once, for a tire-valve. That being denied me, I am now free to enjoy my book and the fields at will."

"Pray pardon me," said Lady Sibyl coldly, and was starting the car when the man raised his hand.

"Please," he said penitently, "forgive me. I really wish more than anything in the world to be taken to the

next village. You are exceedingly kind and I am very rude, though what I have told you is the truth." He hesitated a moment. "I beg your pardon," he added; "may I ask whether you intended lunching there—at the Sign of the Spotted Leopard?"

Lady Sibyl deferred to Tibby.

"Yep," replied the lad briefly.

"Then," said the stranger modestly, "perhaps I may make a further suggestion. The Sign of the Spotted Leopard went, the day before yesterday, into a receiver's hands, and there isn't a sandwich fit to eat in the whole place."

Lady Sibyl frowned. "How annoying!" she said impulsively. "I'm very hungry."

The stranger bowed. "If you will allow me," he said, "my hampers. They are well filled. I would be happy if you would honor me. A short distance over the hill lies the Grove of the Lady Birches. We can, if you will, and if madam is willing"—with a glance at the sleeping passenger in the tonneau—"take a hasty luncheon there by Lady Birch spring."

He waited expectantly for her reply, with the little deferential stooping of the shoulders with which his words had been accompanied. Lady Sibyl hesitated. The road was empty, the road was long and lay white in the mild heat of high noon. She was very hungry. To lunch from strange hampers in the Grove of the Lady Birches by Lady Birch spring! It sounded very alluring. Besides, the little old lady was bound for the same grove, and it was, in a measure, necessary to see her through her adventure. A little dimple crept and lurked in Lady Sibyl's cheek and was banished, but her eyes unwillingly gave consent, even before her formal and hesitant words. It was the mad thing, the impossible thing, but it was Lady Sibyl's first day of freedom, and it tasted sweet and as if the wine of autumn were mingled in it. With Tibby's help the hampers were transferred from the stranger's car to her own, the stranger himself took his seat, and together the four adventurers moved forward, the plump

little old lady still drooping, undisturbed, in the tonneau.

Like a great, colored room, brown-mossed under foot, with a sky-blue curtain patterned in gorgeous lemon and white and opal overhead, stretched, silent and spicy-breathed and warm with noon, the Wood of the Silver Birches. It was a room upheld by silver columns down which the sun wantoned caressingly, painting this pale pillar a rich amber, touching that one with delicate traceries and arabesques of shadow and warm color. Into its pungent depth, when the little old lady had been effectually awakened, went the four strangely met companions. The stranger walked before, laden with a great wicker hamper that seemed bursting with delicate spoil. Lady Sibyl followed with the plump little old lady leaning on her arm, exclaiming delightedly at every step that this was a wood in which one might be lost and *never* have to be dressed for company. Tibby brought up the rear with a basket on one arm and a sealed tin of ice under the other. So they took their course over crackling fern for a quarter of a mile or more.

Lady Sibyl was exultant. The strangeness of the whole experience, its absolute impossibility when viewed from any standpoint of her life or her friends, the freedom and delicious irrationality of the unexpected occasion were like a song in her ears. Far down the road over which they had just come lay the discarded thought of the passenger list of the *Teutonic*.

At last, where the branches twisted most ravishingly overhead, their guide paused and set down his burden. Almost at Lady Sibyl's feet, from among gray-green rocks buried in brown fern, bubbled and sang a little spring that took its bright way through fallen leaves in a very riot of delight that it was not yet winter and that its own joy was as yet unconfined. Here the stranger gravely produced a card and offered it to Lady Sibyl. She read:

Mr. Philip Winchell Maverick
which, if denominative, was not explanatory.

"I am Sibyl Chevelton," she returned simply, and turned in some hesitation to the little old woman, who divined her difficulty.

"You may call me," said the little old woman, "Lady Imogen. It is not my name," she added truthfully, "but I have always thought it a very pretty name, and I don't know any better time to adopt it."

"One should certainly have a new name and a new age when one goes in the woods," assented Lady Sibyl. "And this is Tibby," she added.

Maverick gave Tibby a tablecloth.

"Quite right," he said. "'Lady Imogen,'" he begged, "will you kindly select the spot where this is to be laid?"

"Lady Imogen" found an open, grassy place at a little distance, and there she spread the cloth and laid the serviettes while Lady Sibyl and Maverick unpacked the hamper.

"And I," said Maverick gravely, handing a brace of cold birds, "was mourning only this morning that I could not ride at adventure in the green wood, Miss Chevelton."

"Were you, really?" asked Lady Sibyl, laughing a little in sheer delight at what he had called her. "I lament it every day. But you made this adventure."

"No," said Maverick gravely, "this adventure is the gift of Saint Syrol."

"Saint Syrol?" repeated Lady Sibyl wonderingly. "That sounds like a prince, not like a saint."

"I will tell you who Saint Syrol is, since you don't know him," said Maverick. "Will you make the salad dressing, or shall I? You will? Thank you. Saint Syrol," he finished, dashing the tender heads of lettuce in the spring, "is the guardian angel of all who worship the Magic Adventures."

Lady Sibyl, pouring a velvet stream of oil on the crimson vinegar, looked up enchanted.

"The Magic Adventures?" she repeated lingeringly.

Maverick nodded, delighting in her delight.

"The Magic Adventures," he explained, "are the adventures that lie

close to everyday adventures—just as all magic lies close to everyday affairs. For example, it is not necessarily the man who climbs a mountain or shoots a tiger or gets lost in a jungle who has an adventure. It is the man who does those things, thinking meanwhile not so much about mountain-climbing and the habits of tigers and the vegetation of the jungles as of the magic of all three."

"Oh, I know, I know!" said Lady Sibyl. "And Saint Syrol?"

"Saint Syrol," went on Maverick, diving repeatedly into the deep hamper, "spent his life proving the converse of this proposition. That is, that it is not the people who stay at home and indulge in pastimes and know books who get the magic of life—but rather the people who see the adventure in everything. Consequently he spent his life in the four walls of his garden, and there had the most marvelous and delightful experiences—with shadows and little leaves and kinds of wind and flowers-in-the-dark, and buds that ring like bells in the moonlight, and a harp played in the dark of a garden, and fruit gathered with the dew on it and eaten with certain spices. And he anointed his eyes with secret herbs and simples, and he saw wonderful things. And before he died he wrote of all these in 'The Book of Magic Adventures.'"

Lady Sibyl, with idle hands, sat listening.

"Oh," she cried, "how wonderful! How wonderful!"

Maverick smiled appreciatively. "Today is the good old man's birthday," said he, "and it is called Saint Syrol's day, though few celebrate it. But it falls out that on this day the hearts of all true believers, whether they know about the saint or not, are wonderfully stirred. And they are seized with a desire to go out and find magic."

Lady Sibyl looked away in the dim silver of the woods at her right, and though she would have spoken she fell silent, with the wonder of it all. Far down a white avenue she saw Tibby,

rapt, and, he thought, unobserved, stealing about from curly trunk to trunk, chewing strange spicy compounds whose properties did not concern him, his ink-stained hands filled with sweet-smelling stems, and she saw him suddenly lie at full length on the springing sod, kicking up his shabby heels luxuriously, hat off, head pressed deep in the rustling colored leaves.

She looked away to the open space where the white cloth glimmered ready for the feast, and she saw the little old lady, her shawl thrown aside, her bonnet slipped back, standing close to a great tree and looking up, up to the distracting depths of pure blue, the wind fanning her white curls, a half-eaten cake in her ungloved hand, a little smile on her lips. Nearby Maverick was distributing sandwiches, on wooden plates, and on a rock lay his book, green-covered, promisingly plump—"The Booke of Magic Adventures"! Why, these three, whom by all the canons of good sense and by all the code of her world she ought not to be with on these terms—these three were more perfectly of her world than—the rows of portrait ladies in Burkely Manor, or even than Pamela herself! The full tide of the joy of things, that inner joy that comes not in the doing, or the having, or even the knowing of anything in the world, but rather in the *being* of something akin to all gracious aspects, the full entering into and abiding among the homeliest beauty of outdoor living, suddenly possessed and mastered Lady Sibyl, and she burst into a glad little snatch of song for the pure bliss of the moment, for the pure gratitude of being one of those to whom the Hidden Magic has been revealed.

"Are we all ready?" cried Maverick.

In a few minutes luncheon was spread, and "Lady Imogen," throned at the table's head, laid aside her cake for more substantial delights.

"Oh," she cried suddenly, angry tears welling to her eyes, "think of me! Forty years without a holiday! I knew I should remember how the

woods smelled if I could find them. But am I really lost?" she inquired in sudden alarm.

"I am," said Lady Sibyl happily, "and so you must be."

"Hully gee," said Tibby, lingering—but not perceptibly—over a leg of cold squab. "De odder fellers'll never believe it!"

Lady Sibyl looked across at Maverick.

"The Booke of Magic Adventures'!" she repeated. "I'm afraid I'll never believe it either, afterward."

"And I'm afraid," said Maverick slowly, "that I'll never forget it."

After luncheon the hampers were briskly repacked, and "Lady Imogen," laboring in the belief that she was vastly helpful, hurried about like a girl, scattering crumbs for the birds over every available rock.

"For runaway birds, you know," she explained mysteriously. "I'm sure they don't like taking medicine at home, either."

They trailed through the russet ways, back to the road, under chestnuts whose bursting burrs had showered brown fruit on the brown moss. Tibby waited to fill his pockets.

"Fill up de kids," he said sagaciously, "an' dey'll b'lieve anythin' I tell 'em to."

"Lady Imogen" made no objection to taking her place in the car. Her project of being "lost" was delightfully elastic in its application. It was a run of but a few miles to the village. There, almost the first building that they passed was the Sign of the Spotted Leopard, its shutters up and its door fast. A few streets on brought Maverick to a base of supplies and, armed with a pocketful of tire-valves, they took their way back, past the Wood of the Silver Birches, to the scene of the morning's adventure.

When Maverick stood by the roadside near his disabled machine, with his hampers beside him, Lady Sibyl put out her hand.

"I do thank you," she said simply.

Maverick bowed gravely. "It has been a Magic Adventure indeed for

me," he said. "I am sorry that it is ended."

Lady Sibyl looked down the road, hazy in the fire of autumn leaves.

"Saint Syrol has been very gracious," she said lightly. "May the good saint prosper!"

It was no wonder that, as she turned to Maverick shyly and nodded him farewell, he found her wholly beguiling. Perhaps it was this, perhaps it was the mere madness of Saint Syrol's day that slept in the soft air; high in the afternoon blue hung the white moon, yet untamed to the uses of the night's silver.

"Look," said Maverick, "Saint Syrol's moon is up! May it bring you dreams of Saint Syrol's day."

"Good-bye, good-bye!" called "Lady Imogen" peremptorily. "I shall never take any more medicine, but I really must get back to my afternoon nap!"

Maverick, standing bare-headed in the checkered road, looked after them for a long time. When the white veil had fluttered over the brow of a hill, he turned blankly to the empty meadows.

"Gad," he said between his teeth, "consider civilization! It is what is the matter with everything. When did Sir Galahad ever stand helpless while a mysterious damsel motored over a hill and vanished? Curses on the civilization and the dinner engagement that keep me from following her around the world!"

The fields were lying in warm light, haunted by long, slanting shadows. Lady Sibyl threw her veil from her face and sang little snatches of song as she spun along, the red leaves drifting about her. Tibby was silent with chestnuts, and "Lady Imogen" had at once fallen peacefully asleep.

As they approached the stone wall from whose gate "Lady Imogen" had mysteriously made her exit, Lady Sibyl saw a hatless young woman in black hurrying along the roadside. Lady Sibyl slowed the car opposite the gate, and glanced at her sleeping guest in some perplexity. The young woman uttered an exclamation and hastened forward.

"Mrs. Benson!" she cried sharply, and "Lady Imogen" opened her eyes.

"No more of the tablets!" cried "Lady Imogen" severely. "I'll take my powders, but as for the tablets, I'd as lief swallow my thimble."

"Yes, yes, Mrs. Benson!" cried the young woman soothingly. Then, as "Lady Imogen" rose, and Tibby lifted the seat and opened the door, the young woman turned to Lady Sibyl.

"I have to thank you," she said gratefully. "Mrs. Benson grows very lonely at times, and this morning while I was away—"

"It isn't that," interrupted "Lady Imogen" plaintively. "I like loneliness well enough, but I want woods to come with it. But all I get is loneliness, with all of you watching me. I wanted to get lost and find barberries, and drink out of a gourd—but it was time for my nap," she finished wearily, "and so I came back. Oh, I haven't the courage to go after my dreams, that's all!" wailed "Lady Imogen" suddenly.

Lady Sibyl sprang to the ground and caught "Lady Imogen's" hands, cold and trembling, in her own.

"Good-bye," she said, her eyes filling with swift tears. "But perhaps, if we just stay at home, the dreams will come to us!"

She left them waving farewells.

"Oh," she thought, "the world is all alike. Mad or sane, office-boy or Saint Syrol's prophet, or English-woman at large in America—we are all looking for dreams to come true, and longing to run away to find them. Perhaps that is why they don't come to us."

The shadows were lengthening and growing indistinct, and the sun hung low and red above the poplars at the edge of the far field. For the first time, as she looked, Lady Sibyl felt alarm, for the lowering sun takes confidence with him, a hostage. Then the spirit of the day danced back to her face. This was a day to remember, and therefore it was a day to live completely—the day of Magic Adventures. Tomorrow she would be laughing over it, safely

domesticated at Queenborough Place. Today she was tasting to the full her first hours of liberty.

Past little toy houses sunk in tulip trees they went, and past riots of flaming creeper over latticed windows, and past spicy sweet fields, ready for even-song. And at last, when the edge of the Park was reached, Lady Sibyl relinquished her seat, and Tibby ran the machine down the Avenue and on to the ferry without a second to spare. It was but a few minutes after six o'clock when they passed Queenborough Lodge.

"What about you?" asked Lady Sibyl suddenly of Tibby. "Won't they be anxious about you at home?"

"Who?" asked Tibby, staring. "Not me? Why, me, I don't live anywhere to speak of. No, ma'am. I ain't expected."

A moment afterward Tibby, taking the car to the stables, crushed ecstatically in his hand something that she had given him.

"Hully gee!" he reflected. "I'd 'a' went fer not'in'!"

Lady Sibyl gained her own rooms without encountering anyone but the butler, from whom she learned that Queenborough had returned two hours before. She sent word to Pamela that she had arrived, and then hurried away to dress. Half an hour later Pamela, very splendid in white velvet and opals, fluttered into her sitting-room.

"Sibyl, Sibyl," she exclaimed distractedly, "Harvey has been so worried. Where on earth——?"

"Oh," said Lady Sibyl, "it wasn't on this earth, Pamela. It was in an enchanted country, with silver birches and the smell of the woods—the woods—the woods! Pamela, have you taught the boys fairy stories?"

"What do you mean?" cried Pamela. "No, of course not. I've had all I could do to have them taught what they ought to know. Sibyl, where have you been?"

Lady Sibyl laughed tantalizingly.

"I've spent Saint Syrol's day," she replied, "in the Wood of the Silver Birches, with 'Lady Imogen,' who

wanted to get lost. If you will have it, I had a run in Westchester County and back, discreetly piloted by your husband's office-boy. And shall I wear pearls or moonstones, Pamela?"

Mrs. Queenborough threw up her glittering hands.

"Perhaps you'll be interested to know," she said a little coldly, "that Harvey, who doesn't know anything about anything," she added significantly, "has brought the Marquis of Winnesdale out to dine. But I'm not going to let him take you in," she said, and swept from the room.

Lady Sibyl looked gravely in the mirror for a moment as her maid clasped her moonstones about her throat.

"The Marquis of Winnesdale," she thought suddenly. "Oh, his trim little landscapes in oil and his trim little family-tree!"

Lady Sibyl had never been so beautiful, the Marquis of Winnesdale thought, as when she came down to the drawing-room, her face still aglow with the joy of her day. The marquis would have been delightfully boyish and eager if he had not so long played at being bored with life—a dangerous toy in the hands of the children who invariably affect it.

"And what have you been doin' in America?" he asked Lady Sibyl, in his half-staccato, half-drawl. "Rusticat-in', eh? Findin' out pretty, primeval secrets—eh?"

"I've done nothing worth while yet," returned Lady Sibyl serenely, "but I'm thinking very seriously, Lord Winnesdale, of letting down my hair and playing Indian girl all over the estate."

Mr. Headly Maddler nodded and smiled quizzically.

"Exactly," he nodded. "Women love to breathe the atmosphere of another age, and, being fallen by accident upon the evil days of the twentieth century——"

Lady Sibyl turned a radiant face upon him.

"Ah, Mr. Maddler," she cried softly, "today I can instruct you. I've been up in the woods of your Westchester

County, and I've found out what England and most of America do not know—that the twentieth-century woods have all the dead centuries in them, waiting to be re-lived."

Mr. Madder shrugged his shoulders. "Women of imagination—" he began to repeat.

"What an interestin' fancy, Lady Sibyl!" said the Marquis of Winnesdale.

When the last guest arrived, Lady Sibyl was looking over some music. Mrs. Queenborough, presenting him to her with a grave, modulated word or two to the effect that he was to take her sister down, went off on the arm of the marquis. And there before Lady Sibyl, quite without warning as is the coming of any god of the woods, stood Maverick.

She looked at him helplessly, her pretty greeting idle on her lips, but, in spite of her will, leaping to her eyes.

"Ah," said Maverick wistfully, "but is this only the dream that we wished each other?"

"I think," said Lady Sibyl wonderingly, "that this is more than dreams can do."

He turned to her radiantly, compelling her eyes.

"It is the Magic Adventure," he said softly.

She laid her hand on his arm, and

they went down the stairs. The soft speech and laughter of the others flowed about them as they took their places. Mr. Madder was telling how someone had come a nasty cropper at an old stile in the hunt that day, and the Marquis of Winnesdale was drawing musically through an incident of himself and the ferry ticket-taker.

"This," said Maverick happily, "is strange company for two spirits of Saint Syrol's day!"

The eyes of both wandered to the window, standing open to the white terrace, where lay the world of the woods—their world, with the high, trembling trees and the sleepy-sweet wind poured through the leaves by secret hands.

"But we have kept tryst," said Lady Sibyl. "Saint Syrol's moon is up!"

Afterward, in the sane and illumined days that followed the coming of her great love, Lady Sibyl, grown wise and tender and strong in the knowledge that life is far greater than dreams, would sometimes ask him if it could really have happened—that madcap Saint Syrol's day.

"Perhaps not," Maverick would answer lightly. "Perhaps it is only one of the things that might have happened. For we all dream of those!"



NOTHING MORE NEEDED

MRS. CLARKER—You will never admit that you have made a mistake.
CLARKER—I don't need to; that marriage certificate is evidence enough.



THE CEREMONY

"WHAT was the wedding like?"
"Beautiful. It beggared description and her father."

DAFFODILS

THE silver snowdrop's tinkling bell
 Has ceased its early chime;
 The fragile crocus did but dwell
 A rainbow's short lifetime.

And now its Iris-beauty lies
 Against the cold, brown earth;
 A butterfly's torn wing that cries
 To March's wild, mad mirth.

But the yellow flare of daffodils
 Breaks like the sunshine's ray,
 Low-lying 'tween the distant hills
 At closing of the day.

And they wrap the earth in gladness bright,
 So that, when dusk has come,
 One thinks it cannot yet be night
 For the golden light therefrom.

NATHALIE BOULIGNY SMYTH.



POOR HUMAN NATURE

CRAWFORD—What object can people have in making trouble?

CRABSHAW—I guess it's a question of supply and demand. There are just as many other people looking for it.



AT THE WOMAN'S CLUB

"WHY was she blackballed?"
 "Why, because."



ON THE OTHER SIDE

SENIOR—Well, my boy, have you been a credit to me at college?
 JUNIOR—No, dad, a debit.

THE CAUSE

By Owen Oliver

THE Cause that I fought for doesn't matter now. The right prevailed, slowly and under another name, when politicians had forgotten the matter. It ought never to have been a matter of politics. But it made a good party-cry; and the Ins and the Outs persuaded the people to take sides upon it.

I had no conviction upon the subject myself, so I chose the side that was easiest to write upon. I was a journalist with a taste for handling figures, and a knack of making things seem plainer than they are. I am no longer a journalist, so I can give away the secret. You leave the difficult points out. Sometimes they matter. Sometimes they don't. In this case they did.

After my third article in the *Daily Lyre* a great man sent for me. He was in the Government, and he really was a great man. He judged me quickly and correctly.

"We needn't talk round things," he said. "The question doesn't matter a brass farthing, one way or the other, so far as I can see; but we've got to wrangle about something, and we've stumbled upon this. Your articles have glorified it into a 'cause,' and voters like to vote about something big. So we're going to the polls upon it. Unfortunately, it's a real issue, and the conclusion turns upon real figures and facts. There's a wide choice of facts and figures; and we politicians aren't good at handling either. I see from your articles that you are, and you have the gift of the pen. I am told that you have the

gift of the tongue also. A very little will turn the elections, and we want to make use of you. What do *you* want?"

I stretched myself back in my chair, with my arms behind my head, and measured my man and myself. He was no cleverer than I; but he was the buyer of the brains, and I the seller. He need not buy unless he liked, and I *had* to sell. That was his advantage. On the other hand, the price didn't matter so much to him as to me, and he wouldn't fight so hard about terms. That was mine. I would play the big game.

"The Governorship of Colonia," I said calmly.

He raised his eyebrows and shook his head emphatically. I had known that he would.

"We'll talk sense," he said curtly.

"It's your turn, my lord," I answered politely.

He twisted his mustache and measured me. As I have said, he judged me correctly. I am not a weak man.

"We've got to get rid of Lord Exe," he explained. "He is a—an influential fool. We've settled to give him Colonia."

"Then you had better make use of *him*," I retorted. I rose to go, but the great man motioned me back to my seat.

"Come, Mr. Drake," he said, with a smile. "You're bluffing, as our Yankee friends say. You'd take less, if you knew you couldn't get that."

"And you'd give that, if you knew I wouldn't take less," I retorted.

He stroked his mustache to cover the smile on his lips; but I detected

it in his eyes. He liked me, I saw. That was another point in my favor.

"It doesn't fall vacant till after the general election," he reminded me. "If we're out I can't give it to you."

"I understand," I assented.

He considered with a frown. "Very well," he promised at length. "You pledge yourself to us?"

I shook my head. "No pledge," I said. "I've never been a tied man yet. If I back out, you back out. That's all."

He laughed carelessly. "You won't back out, because you couldn't get a better offer. We'll put you in for Boroughby. It's unopposed. The fund will pay your election expenses. See Newby about that. Good morning."

"Good morning, my lord," I said. The air seemed full of excitement as I walked out into the street. The chance of my life was in my hands, and I believed in myself. I had come also to believe in the Cause.

I made a hit in the House, as I had done in the papers, and my fellow M.P.'s accepted me as an authority. I gave them such facts and arguments as they could take in, and kept back those which they could not grasp. They thought that I understood the subject, because they thought that they understood me! The electors thought they understood the question because they thought they understood them.

So the Cause made good progress in Parliament and on the platforms; but in the press and in the social circles where political wires are pulled we met with unexpected opposition. The centre of the opposition was Lady Alice Armand. She was young and beautiful, and the second daughter of a duke. She had been a star at Girtton, three years before, and she had all the charm and goodness imaginable, and she wrote under the name of "Cecil Gray." I had some advantage in the press—she would admit that I was the more skilled writer—but I was not in political society. And I think anyhow she would have

beaten me there; for society understands people, if it understands nothing else, and even her opponents trusted her.

"She has only one weakness," the Great Man said. In spite of political diversities he knew her intimately. "She is in earnest—terribly in earnest. If you could persuade her that our view is right, she'd wear the white sheet unflinchingly. Look here, Drake; you really *are* a clever chap. Try if you can't convert her. My sister will introduce you."

"There was a missionary who set out to convert the Jews," I warned him. "They made a Jew of him! Your Lady Alice is a magnetic person."

He laughed carelessly.

"The missionary was too much in earnest," he asserted. "You're no missionary. As to magnetism—you are probably quite aware that *you* are an attractive and magnetic young man. It wouldn't do you any harm to get into society. A colonial governor ought to be married; and there are lots of nice girls who would be—helpful in a career. Shall I give you a note to my sister?"

"Many thanks," I agreed. I wasn't prepared to marry a "helpful" lady if I did not like her; but I was prepared to like her if she was helpful!

I went to the great lady, his sister, with the note; and she invited me to somebody else's ball that evening and introduced me to Lady Alice.

"I haven't asked you beforehand if you want to know each other," she said, "because of your silly politics; but really, my dears, you ought to be mutually interesting. See if you can't talk music or drama or art; and, if you *must* quarrel about your political enormities, don't do it here." Then she disappeared.

"I'm afraid I'm not interesting on the fine arts," I apologized. "Will you try me on my enormities?"

Lady Alice looked at me with her big black eyes wide open. She had a gift, which I have found in no other

beautiful woman, of looking right at you without any suspicion of coquetry.

"I should very much like to discuss our points of difference," she said. "But they are too serious for a ball-room conversation. Could we find some other occasion?"

"If Daniel might venture into the lion's den?"

"If he will promise not to shut the lion's mouth"—she smiled brightly—"I should think it very nice of you."

We fixed upon the next afternoon. Then we danced a valse. I should scarcely have ventured to ask so great a lady for a dance; but she saw me glance at her program, and asked smilingly if dancing was one of the fine arts that did not appeal to me. I think she understood my hesitation and helped me. She was like that. We danced one of the extras afterward. We were both good dancers, and good dancers soon make friends. So we started our discussion upon a comfortable footing.

"I want to discuss the merits of the question," she began, "not its politics. It is absurd that such a matter should be decided as a side-issue of an election, and by ignorant voters. In everything but politics the ignorant refer their differences to the expert. In politics the experts refer them to—the voter!"

"The presumption is that the expert will make out the best case and prevail."

"The presumption is doubly incorrect. The best case doesn't appeal most to the public, and the wisest man doesn't always put his case best. Science is made by the *savant*, not by the popular lecturer."

"Science is matter of proof. Politics is matter of opinion. You can't demonstrate your conclusion."

"In this case you can. Suppose it were a matter of business, and you and I were business people. We shouldn't argue with one another by long speeches addressed to an ignorant third person. We should sit down at a table and thresh it out, and come to a conclusion, between ourselves."

"Possibly. But it isn't a matter of

business, and we can't settle it between ourselves."

"Not directly; but indirectly we can. We are both sincere, and open to conviction. If one of us can convince the other, we can convince other people between us. Shall we try?"

I accepted the challenge readily. As I have owned, I had not probed the question to the bottom, and I thought my arguments stronger than they were. They *were* strong enough to save me from her; but they were not strong enough to save me from myself. I did not own my defeat, and she did not suspect me of concealing it.

"I do not deny the correctness of your principles, Lady Alice," I said finally; "but political questions are questions of practice. The two are very different."

"Not if one's view is wide enough," she pleaded. "The principles of yesterday are the practice of today. The martyrs are dead; but their faith is living. The heroes are gone, but their country is free. We owe it to our ancestors to make sacrifices for tomorrow. Perhaps this question, in itself, is not worth the sacrifice. Perhaps, as you say, it won't matter much in a hundred years' time; but it will matter if we have set the example of bravely doing our best, when it wasn't the easiest thing to do. If you would think of it like that——?"

"The practical best is the best that men can be got to carry out," I asserted. "Politics has no use for ideals."

"Everything good is an ideal," she insisted. "Why has Christianity moved the world? Because its ideal is unattainable. Man never reaches it. There is always something to look up to. I give up the attempt to convince you on this question, Mr. Drake. You are cleverer than I; and your arguments will prevail over mine. But—may I speak to you, not as a political opponent, but as a man? As a strong man whom I esteem? I should like to feel that you were looking up to—to something—" She flushed with earnestness, and I flushed for—other reasons.

"Yes," I said, "you may feel that, Lady Alice. It doesn't come easy to me to 'look up'; but I shall have no difficulty in looking up to *you*. Good-bye."

I looked up to her and down on myself as I walked home; but I could not look down on the governorship. So I sat at my desk all that evening, and wrote my usual article for the *Daily Lyre*. I called it "Common Sense"; and it proved a successful appeal to the voter who had none.

Two days later Lady Alice replied in the *Trumpet*. Her article was headed, "Do Right!" It was frankly a criticism upon my article. She wrote of me as "an opponent whose conspicuous ability and evident sincerity I acknowledge and admire." She addressed herself to "those who will not believe in any expediency but right," and admitted the practical difficulties which I urged to the full. "There are sacrifices to make," she said. "Let us make them!"

I bit my lip over the article; but my leader chuckled.

"A good sermon," he said, "but a bad political move. She's admitted your best points, and met you on your own ground. You'll have an easy victory in the controversy."

Nevertheless I declined controversy with her.

"Anyone who knows the charming and gifted lady who writes as Cecil Gray," I wrote, "will believe that her high ideals might be practicable in a utopian existence of beings like herself. But we are only human beings, and this is the only life that we live. Ideals are only useful to us if we can realize them in actual, everyday life. No argument is possible between Cecil Gray and myself, because she addresses herself to saints out of the rush and worry of life, and I address myself to practical, struggling women and men. They do not ask me about principles, but how this question will touch them in their pocket, in their comfort, in their everyday life. I do not pretend to show them more than that. I can claim no higher testi-

monial than Cecil Gray's admission that I show them so much correctly. I shall not, therefore, deal with her article; but I am glad to have this opportunity of recording my great admiration for her."

"I think you must have some Irish ancestors who kissed the Blarney stone!" the Great Man said when he had read my article. "You have demolished her article without offending her. She told my sister that she admires you greatly, and thinks that any views which you express are worthy of consideration, although she cannot herself agree with you. By the way, Drake—I like you, you know—don't fancy that even a colonial governor is a match for the Duke of Armand's daughter."

I nodded without answering. He was a singularly wise man, and it did not follow that others would see my admiration for her because he saw it; but I did not wish to risk making a fool of myself. So I decided to avoid talking to her. But she always seemed anxious to talk to me when we met, and I could not resist the temptation. We met frequently, and I talked to her a great deal. She never argued with me about the Cause now; but just to know her was argument enough. I grew to hate the Cause, but it was my only road to the governorship; and so far as I could judge the result of the election was practically secured.

She owed as much to me three days before the election.

"You are going to win," she said suddenly. "I don't bear any malice because you have beaten me. You are cleverer than I; and you know how to reach people. Your arguments are true, too, so far as they go. Even my own people quote them against me. Do you know there is one thing that almost makes me believe them. *You* believe in them—and I believe in you!"

When a man is hit hard enough he never knows just how he feels. I felt like that. Then I caught a deep breath, as if I hadn't been breathing before.

"I don't believe them," I said stead-

ily. "They offered me a governorship. I was a poor man and ambitious, and I didn't know you then. I didn't think these things mattered—before."

I took my hat and walked slowly to the door. I didn't look at her; but I heard her gasp. She gave a sharp, hurt cry—I think she called me back—as I took the handle; but I did not return. I did not even call myself a fool. I didn't think about myself at all; only of her.

I applied that afternoon for the Chiltern Hundreds, and I wrote to my leader and the press. "The missionary has been converted," I told him. "When I knew her I had to be a man. I'm sorry to have failed you. You needn't fear that I shall give the party away. I'm going to play the game."

"I have looked the question fairly in the face," I told the papers, "and I see that I am wrong. The principles involved are more important than their effects, and hitherto I have only concerned myself with the latter."

I didn't conceal the rest to save myself, but for his sake—and hers.

I wrote to some friends in South Africa, and asked them to get me a place as a clerk, warehouseman—anything. I didn't read the papers, but I learned from the placards and from casual conversations that the Cause prevailed, though by a much smaller majority than had been anticipated. The loss of votes was put down to my defection. My influence had been very strong, it seemed, and I might have been a great man if I had not retired from political life. I admitted to myself now that I had been a fool; but I would have done it again.

I did not hear from the party, but Lady Alice wrote to me. I returned her letter unopened, with a short note.

DEAR LADY ALICE:

It is not unkindness that I fear in your letter, but kindness. Out of your goodness do not hurt me by trying to console. Believe me, my memory of you will always be the best thing in my life.

Yours very truly,

ROBERT DRAKE.

She wrote again, and I returned the letter with a briefer note:

I love you. Now you will understand.

It was the day before I was leaving for South Africa that I wrote this. I was feverishly anxious to get away from England, and I arrived at Waterloo an hour before the train left. As I strolled along the platform I met Lady Alice, leaning on my ex-leader's arm. She did not speak, only looked at me; but he took my arm with his disengaged hand.

"I've always noticed," he said, "that there's no one so dense as a clever man. He doesn't even know his friends! So you thought you were going to slip off without saying good-bye?"

"God bless you, sir—both," I said. My voice was husky. "I—I had to go."

"Yes," he agreed, "you had to go; but why to South Africa?"

"Can you suggest anywhere better?" I asked.

"Colonia," he said. "I've appointed you governor—on a condition." We grasped hands tightly.

"I accept blindfold any condition that you make," I told him.

He smiled.

"It's nothing much," he stated. "Just to get married. I told you a governor ought to— There's a man I must speak to. Lady Alice will tell you—the rest."

He hurried away, and I found myself standing with her. I had just sense enough to give her my arm and walk down to the quiet end of the platform. I could not find my voice, even then; and it was she who spoke first.

"Now," she whispered, "you will understand."

"Dearest of all women," I said, "I understand. You would sacrifice yourself, your position, for one who is quite unworthy of you, but—"

"There is no 'but,'" she said, "and no sacrifice. Oh, no! It is not a sacrifice. Or, if you call it one—well, we'll say that in practice I am wrong. But there is the principle—to give up everything—and think it nothing—for—the sake of all true men and loving women—for the greatest Cause!"

LIMITATION

A MONG all creatures ever God conceived
 The most superb and strange, far in the van
 Of all that has been, wearing like a prince
 The native glory of the heavenly plan,
 He comes, straight-limbed, white-browed, the master, Man,
 With his proud rallying word, "I have achieved.

"Mankind owes this to *me*. This *I* have done."
 So takes the merit of the town or tower
 Or little system christened with his name,
 Harvests the quick brief worship of the hour,
 And sets a wistful record of his power
 In pomp of golden blazonry and stone.

Thy works? This unlearned law—this faulty creed?
 This fragment of a half truth, poorly seen?
 Thy works, when this, thy boast—all boasts of man,
 And every shining glory he can glean,
 Ere time's first dawn lay perfect and serene
 Waiting for thee and brooding on thy need!

Thy fairest work is but a following
 Afar toward an end thou wilt not find—
 A frail and finite thing soon to be lost
 In the vast brightness of the initial mind.
 Thou canst not span the stars nor rule the wind
 Nor make one little linnet's shining wing.

MILDRED I. MCNEAL.



THE MORE THE MERRIER

MRS. ARCHER—I thought your husband didn't like children.
 MRS. PAYNE—He didn't, but you see he has been appointed enumerator of our school district and he gets five cents for each child he finds.



WHAT HE WOULD HAVE SUPPOSED

HE—You have an appointment to call on Mrs. Gadabout? At her home?
 HIS WIFE—Certainly. Where would you suppose?
 "Oh, almost anywhere else."

CONCERNING MR. PENWINKLE

By Virginia Woodward Cloud

WE were summoned to the Penwinkle house to consider the disposition of Uncle Penwinkle's property.

Cousin Marius Penwinkle's wife and daughter came over in a purple automobile, and sat openly expressing through their lorgnettes what we were all inwardly wondering: why old McCrae should have assembled us to sit, literally and metaphorically, upon the moth-eaten possessions of a hypochondriac who bought three pennies' worth of beef for a meal, and looked upon a roe-herring as a sumptuous repast.

John Davenport Penwinkle was known to have possessed:

An Empire coat, turned green at the seams.

A snuffbox presented to a great-grand Penwinkle by George the Fourth.

A faded eyeglass ribbon an inch wide.

An elephantine fob terminating in a very Penwinkle crest and seal.

A silver candlestick which had lighted him to bed for fifty years, and a superannuated body-servant named Peter, who was chief executioner, culinary expert and domestic of the establishment. For no woman, even in guise of a cook, had ever been seen to enter the Penwinkle walls in the recollection of my generation.

The kith and kin knew but little personally about Uncle Penwinkle, except that he nourished a passion for whist and against women and politics. His seclusion was said to have dated from a complication involving one or both of the latter subjects; and as he could not have avoided them had he re-

mained in the world, he discreetly stepped out of it. My mother had told me in my youth that, after a dozen or so years in Australia, Uncle Penwinkle suddenly appeared, to shut himself in his lonely house, and there, rumor had it, to devote the remainder of his life to nursing a bitter enmity against all creatures feminine. The political scapegoat died of inanition, but the feminine one flourished in family annals, and bore, as is her wont, the brunt of all the eccentricities developed by this exclusive member.

The world's memory being the length of its enjoyment, Uncle Penwinkle was soon forgotten, for all practical purposes. When I was a boy my mother sent me now and then to call upon him, and the visits gradually became a regular part of life's routine. It is possible that heredity was to blame for the bond which they eventually established between Uncle Penwinkle and me. The shadowy, old-fashioned atmosphere, the firelight, the tall candle on the card-table, the portrait of Uncle Penwinkle, a hand thrust into his satin waistcoat, his profile turned after the manner of Washington surveying Valley Forge; the protrusion out of the dusky corner of the Imp of Ely, a bas-relief over Uncle Penwinkle's chair; even the ticking of the great clock, always an hour slow, as if to rebel openly, if vainly, against Time's determined pace—all these grew to be a distinctive part of my imaginative life.

As our acquaintance assumed a more secure footing with years, I managed occasionally to elicit a sarcastic epigram from Uncle Penwinkle, mainly directed against the youth of my own

generation. One night he so far forgot himself as to allude to the late war—meaning that of '12; whereupon I called him a Tory. He rose and steadied himself by the card-table, extending a menacing forefinger.

"And you, sir!" he cried. "Is there one of my name who dares associate himself with the cursed brood of—?"

"Ten o'clock, Marse John, an' yo' water gittin' col'," said Peter's voice, and a dark hand touched his arm warningly.

I determined thereafter to let the sleeping dog of politics lie. And woman? After fifty years did she, too, represent a sleeping dog? The very next time I entered the Penwinkle gate—it was in the dusk of early autumn—a feminine figure emerged from it, and I stood transfixed and not over-pleased, having grown to believe in Uncle Penwinkle's consistencies and to vouch for them. Now the figure looked out of its hood and spoke to me. It was Marabel Lee, another cousin, whose mother made what the family had considered a fine match. Her husband gamed away her money, and she died of heart-failure, and Marabel lived in a cottage alone, and taught a country school. She was usually alluded to by her prosperous kin as "Poor Marabel." But the poverty did not extend to her appearance, for she had attained that which we know as "beauty's height" and possessed the exquisite, soft-grained fairness which comes of generations of nice sensibility toward things material and moral.

"Marabel! In the name of Saint Antony, how did you discover the Penwinkle combination?" I exclaimed.

She smiled through the twilight with an innocent shade of triumph. "I've been in—all the way in—the house several times. The first time, I peeped in the window at Cousin John, and he looked so old and lonely that—that I went in and told him his fire needed fixing."

"Most courageous of your sex!" I interpolated.

"Then I took my hat off and knelt

down and blew the fire, and he said: 'Marabel!'—as if I had been a ghost. He looked so queer that I thought I'd nearly killed him. So I came away."

"He knew your name? Amazing!"

"Others—some others—don't consider it so," said Marabel.

"Go on! Go on!" I urged.

"Not if you laugh at me!"

"I never laugh," I assured her. "Laughter belongs to children and fools and the imp over Uncle Penwinkle's chair."

Marabel inspected me gravely, contemptively, for a moment, and then continued: "Well, I went back the next evening and walked in and sat down beside him. We didn't talk very much, because he looked so unable to express the rage he was evidently undergoing; I really thought once he was going to ring for Peter to put me out."

"Of course! What did you expect?" I asked.

"Not of course, at all," said Marabel. "No one—that is, no one except Uncle Penwinkle—would have thought of such a thing."

"Perhaps." I spoke musingly.

"Oh, you!" Her tone was ambiguous. "But you are growing like him, Cousin Harry."

"I like Uncle Penwinkle!" I chuckled in spite of myself.

Marabel gave me a sweeping glance over her shoulder. "I often go now. But you mustn't tell, because—because—well, he likes to have me come!"

I courteously vowed that Uncle Penwinkle's taste was not dead, at any rate, and started up the road with Marabel, but she stopped me.

"Nonsense! I am your cousin," I expostulated. "I shall not allow you to go back alone!"

A little moon, a young, pallid moon, floated above the firs between the wind clouds, and Marabel smiled up at it in confidence.

"I have been here before—alone. No, Cousin Harry, while I am living by myself I must keep men at a distance."

"Uncle Penwinkle excepted," I retorted.

"Oh, Cousin John is old and lonely."

"So am I," I interpolated.

"But I have made him more comfortable, in little ways. You know he claims to hate women on general principles, but it's a poor principle that cannot be reversed sometimes. He might not let me return if he learned that anyone knew—even you, Cousin Harry—and I'm so sorry for him!"

Marabel was not given to pleading. When she did she was irresistible. I stepped aside meekly, saying:

"It is good of you to give him your time, Marabel."

"And how about yours?" she retorted. "You seldom take a holiday, you are always working, yet for years you have taken care of a helpless old man and have been his only friend. You have cheered him, and have given up many of your evenings to him. Oh, I know, Cousin Harry, I know all about it."

"How has this exceptional knowledge been acquired?" I interrupted.

"Don't be rude," said Marabel. "One must know things unless one is stupid. I know a number about you, sir. One is, that you are not so sarcastic as you sound. Another is, that you have tried, almost as a son would, to make this poor old man happier—"

In vain I assured Marabel that my friendship with Uncle Penwinkle was a mere selfish indulgence to my naturally retiring disposition. She mocked me.

"Uncle Penwinkle did not have to lead a lonely life," I added.

"One does not always reckon with the loneliness of the future when deciding the present," said Marabel.

"Most sagacious of philosophers, are you contemplating matrimony?" I ventured. But Marabel's eyes were on the drifting clouds across the moon.

"Cousin John has suffered," she continued. "He is cynical and impatient, keen and intolerant, sensitive and poetic. You are not unlike him at all." She surveyed me, smiling now, and I laughed aloud. Sensitive, poetic!

Women catch at the floating hair of an idea and think they have the proof.

Then Marabel's face shone out of its hood beneath a lock of hair blown across her brows.

"You would not allow the love for a woman to wreck your life? You would be brave and courageous and fill your place in the world anyhow, wouldn't you, Cousin Harry?"

I assured Marabel that my chief reason for thanksgiving was that no woman filled a vital part in my life or influenced me at all, and she sighed in relief.

"In fact, Marabel, I determined long since to die a bachelor—like Uncle Penwinkle."

"No, no! Not like that; you are made for better than that."

Her voice was strangely intense, and for a second her hand, strong and delicate, lay on my arm, as her eyes scanned my face. Then she flew down the road with a flutter of black drapery blown back, closed upon by darkness, like the woman in Fleury's picture of "A Road by Night."

I went up to the house behind the firs, pondering upon the perversity of the feminine mind. But be it known that thereafter I detected a gentler touch than mine or Peter's in the neighborhood of Uncle Penwinkle. Slight signals, which had passed unnoticed, now appealed to my quickened vision. I became convinced that his chair cushion was of a gayer hue, and that neither Peter nor I had covered his footstool with some frivolous fabric representing gillyflowers in a gale of wind. I missed a coating of dust which usually decorated familiar objects, and was conscious of a little screen between our faces and the candles. The vases on the high mantel, and even the positions of the stalwart furniture, seemed to assume less aggressive and possessive attitudes. In fact, the room had become subjective rather than objective, and Uncle Penwinkle was owner of his Lares and Penates, which heretofore appeared to resent more than a distant acquaintanceship, and to withhold

themselves as if in fear of underbred familiarity. Furthermore, there was something in the atmosphere which suggested the subtle associative odor of late violets. I recalled in a vague way having seen a glass frame for their winter bed under Marabel's cottage window.

Alas for Uncle Penwinkle and his sleeping dogs! Night after night I took silent observation, detective-like, and smiled with cynicism in sympathy with the Imp of Ely over his chair.

One evening I arrived earlier than usual; in fact, it was premeditated. The detective impulse had become an idle but interesting pastime. The heavy curtains covering Uncle Penwinkle's window were slightly apart, and a light impulse caused me to stand on tiptoe to look within.

Then I grasped the sill and clung, gazing with an unaccustomed heart-throb. Marabel sat beside the card-table, the candlelight catching every wave of her ruddy hair, which was piled in a high knot. She wore a quaintly flowered gown, with a waist under the arms, and ruffles falling back from her white throat and arms as she leaned forward reading aloud to Uncle Penwinkle from a newspaper.

The old man sat opposite, the picture of serene content, the expression of which I had never expected to see on his face. His head was bent, his finger-tips together, his gaze upon Marabel. It was a strange but peaceful look, and recalled the face of my mother as I remembered her looking upon the picture of a beloved child who had died in infancy.

But why Marabel should masquerade in this old-fashioned gown for the benefit of Uncle Penwinkle baffled me. I felt like a child at Christmas who is shut out from a whole fairy tale by a closed door. Therefore, I rapped resentfully with the brass knocker, and a few seconds later the interior transformation would have done credit to a more experienced stage-manager than Peter.

He was blowing the fire with the bellows, Uncle Penwinkle was calmly

shuffling cards, the imp above him was grinning out of its shadow with exultation—and Marabel was not there!

But I determined not to be outwitted, for I claimed the right of prior possession, and went earlier than ever in the evenings. I patrolled the road near the Penwinkle gate—for it was frosty now, and starlight. I penetrated the house by unexpected methods and harkened for light and stealthy footfalls. I tacitly set burglar-alarms for Marabel, all of which she evaded with the success of a practiced criminal. Before long I grew irritated and neglected my meals, all the time inwardly railing against Uncle Penwinkle for permitting a woman to become eventually the mainspring of his machinery. Then, one evening, Marabel suddenly appeared at the little field-wicket leading into the place by a side path, and I accused her of trying to elude me.

"Not willingly," said she deftly, and then and there something tremendous happened. I can declare it was all because of a look deep down into Marabel's eyes. I was amazed, stunned, tumultuous, exalted, delirious, all in a second. I had caught the immortal fever which, like a cough, cannot be hid.

"Marabel, I love you, I cannot live without you!" I exclaimed. "And you know it—you have known it, Marabel!"

"No—perhaps so—maybe not," she murmured, striving to pass, but I caught her hands long enough to ask her to marry me then and there, never to leave me—and adding amendments not to be chronicled. But she wrenched her hands away and wrapped them in her cloak, facing me steadily.

"I shall not marry you, Cousin Harry, now or ever. I am going away, up to town, for several months, to take a kindergarten course, and I wish you would see to Cousin Penwinkle. He is very feeble lately."

"Do you mean that you cannot love me, Marabel?" I demanded.

"I mean what I say," said Marabel, flying down the road, and I after her, determined upon pursuit and an-

swer. I caught her cloak, but a sobbing breath checked me.

"Oh, please let me go! Let me go now!"

Then I stood looking after her, losing her in the darkness.

From that time Uncle Penwinkle's disposition underwent an undesirable change. He grew captious if he did not win at cards, and sarcastic if he did. Moreover, I commenced to find the change contagious. Two months passed with no signal from Marabel, and I was about to risk repelling her and to go in search of her when, one stormy night, after a day's business in a neighboring borough, I went up to the Penwinkle house. Old Peter met me at the door, his hand held up to enjoin silence.

"De doctor's gone, suh. He say he can't do nuffin mo'."

I entered, feeling the inexplicable sense of a Presence. Uncle Penwinkle lay on the bed, pallid with approaching death, and Marabel knelt beside him. Her hat and traveling-cloak were on a chair, and she held Uncle Penwinkle's hands in both her own, soothing him with murmured motherly words. As I entered he spoke to her.

"God bless you, Marabel—I knew that you would come at last, my love—always my only love!"

He sighed a last sigh of contentment; then Marabel threw her hands to her face.

"God forgive me if I have done wrong!" I heard her say.

II

A FEW days afterward, at the funeral, she stood in the Penwinkle lot beside old Peter, and in the moment when the earth claimed and received its own, I marked Mrs. Marius taking Marabel's measure in detail. Later, at the gate, she shook hands with me.

"Of course we expected to see you here, Harry, but it was not necessary for dear Angelique to come—although, of course, Marius is Cousin Penwinkle's near relative. Marius has always made

a point of calling on New Year's Day. He says the port was the most excrable he ever tasted." She laid an impressive black kid finger on the window-ledge of the carriage. "Harry, never forget that young people have a duty to discharge toward society."

"And that duty, *chère madame*?" I asked.

"Why—er—to consider it, always," she replied.

I assured Mrs. Marius that I always considered it a bore, but she looked so genuinely horrified that I offered amendment.

"Not when it is the society of Cousin Marius's wife, however."

"Naughty boy!" said the lady. "One can never take him seriously. Ah, Harry, Harry, some day you may realize how serious a matter life is."

And realizing then and there Mrs. Marius's eiderdown existence and how serious a matter it was for a briefless barrister to keep the wolf from crossing his threshold, I sighed in hearty acquiescence.

Cousin Marius climbed heavily into his side of the carriage, saying: "Wasn't that Mary Penwinkle Lee's daughter—tall girl with bright hair and gray eyes? Stunning-looking creature!"

"Cousin Marabel was there, I believe," said I, who had not lost sight of her for the fraction of a minute.

"Cousin? Oh, no real relation," said Mrs. Marius, "is she? Really! Well, she may be a nice enough sort of person, poor Marabel, but for a young woman to live alone—and she might have shown respect enough to have worn a black gown."

"Gad, she's handsome enough in the one she has on!" uttered Cousin Marius as they drove off.

When the black-wheeled edifice disappeared Marabel came down the road with Peter in her wake. He kept on to the lonely house behind the fir. Marabel shut herself behind her hedge and talked across it to me.

"Something must be done for Peter," she said. "He will die of grief and loneliness, Cousin Harry."

"If they killed easily, the world would not be so thickly populated," I assured her; "but I will see to Peter."

She may have divined that Peter was not my sole object in life at the moment, for she said hurriedly: "I return to town in a day or two. Good-bye!"

Then she closed the door, and I went up the road, feeling strangely like—Peter.

It was the day after the funeral that we were summoned by old McCrae to confer about Uncle Penwinkle's property. When we had collected ourselves as a family we realized anew that the sum of Uncle Penwinkle's mortal possessions might be done in very short division.

The pallid sun, that struck sharply through the great windows, revealed the shabbiness of the old-fashioned room and worn carpet. The great chairs were pushed into corners, and the candlestick banished to the dusty mantel, while the card-table held the lawyer's hat and gloves. Mrs. Marius sat on the haircloth sofa, scrutinizing the possibilities through her glass, and her husband walked back and forth, restlessly impatient. Their daughter Angelique sat on an ottoman conversing with her cousin, the briefless barrister, who drew patterns on the carpet with his stick, and thought about one member of the family who should have been there. Angelique possessed the assured prettiness which comes from much grooming and absolute satisfaction with one's clothes.

"Old McCrae is so fussy and important," she was saying. "There is nothing here that would fetch a dollar in a junk-shop, unless it's that horrible grinning gargoye over the chair. I'm quite crazy about that." This of my friend, the Imp of Ely. "Mercy, Harry! Who is that?"

This was of one who stood hesitatingly in the doorway—Marabel, with a slow wave of rose-light mounting distractingly to her white brow and its bright rings of hair. She looked helplessly across at the lawyer as I rose and bent forward.

"Cousin Harry, Mr. McCrae sent for me——"

"Certainly, Miss Lee. Mr. Penwinkle's niece, are you not? All the family is expected."

"No; only his cousin." Marabel turned to retreat, but Cousin Marius thrust a detaining hand out.

"Nonsense, child; sit down! Soon be over. Nothing much to consider. Gad, you're the image of your mother! Every man Jack of us mad about her once! Poor Cousin John! Yes, yes! Here, my dear, this is Mary Lee's daughter——"

Mrs. Marius bowed coldly, and her daughter nodded forcedly as Marabel slipped into a seat in the background. Then the lawyer put a small box on the table and spoke with professional formality—mere words, from which my mind wandered to fix itself upon a ray of light just escaping Marabel's hair.

McCrae had summoned us to consider the property of the deceased client, John Davenport Penwinkle. The mockery of the form caused my glance to stray to the imp beyond. McCrae proceeded:

"Knowing that the late Mr. Penwinkle was of solitary habit and—er—not engaged in business, I was somewhat surprised a few months ago when he sent for me, and placed in my keeping this box, to be held in trust during his lifetime. As the late Mr. Penwinkle died intestate, and suddenly, it now awaits the claim of his nearest of kin. It contains securities and cash to the amount of seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars."

Blank silence.

In one transfixed instant I received a mechanical photograph of the ray of light finding Marabel, even in her corner, and of the slow ebbing of color from her face; of Cousin Marius, hands upon his knees, and an apoplectic stare on his countenance. Then a voice broke the spell.

"Fo' de Lo'd's sake, whar he done keep it all?"

Peter had followed Marabel and now emerged, a dusky figure, from the hall. Then a hubbub of voices

rose, each seeming to vie with the other.

"Next of kin? Why, gad, Harry, that's you!" from Cousin Marius.

"Harry, my dear boy! I feel as if it were my own son!" from his wife.

"Oh, Cousin Harry, what a perfectly lucky thing to happen, and so romantic!" from his daughter.

"Without doubt, as no will has been forthcoming, Mr. Penwinkle is his uncle's heir," from McCrae.

Hands were thrust forward in congratulation; words beat about me like treeless birds, and all the blood in me seemed to sound in my ears.

It was a travesty!—impossible! What motive had Uncle Penwinkle for concealing his money? I turned helplessly toward Marabel—strange, but at some moments a man is actually helpless without a woman to turn to. Then I knew that it was true. Something in her proud face, something radiant, soft, glad, sorry, determined—something that held renunciation and farewell and benison at once—told me all in a second her sweet and foolish thought. She had known it all along, and had refused to marry me while I was ignorant of it. But now—now I could have laughed aloud at the triumphant impossibility of her escaping me. Meanwhile I stood under Uncle Penwinkle's portrait, replying decorously to the expressions humming around me, and only conscious that if mortal power could win her Marabel now was mine. Then old McCrae rapped.

"This is practically all. Of course I was taken into Mr. Penwinkle's confidence concerning his property, when he placed it with me. The fortune was made years ago while he was in Australia, but failing to devote it to the purpose for which it was intended, he refused to touch it. It has been accumulating interest for fifty years. I need not add, Mr. Penwinkle, that our firm awaits your pleasure concerning any little matter requiring legal adjustment. Meanwhile"—he took his hat up—"I will

return the box to the Safe Deposit, and await your directions."

"Des a minute, suh—hol' on, suh, please; I got sumpin." Old Peter made forward respectfully, one hand clutching his stick, the other searching for something apparently hidden between his suspender and his ragged coat. "Dere's been so much miratin' and doin' sence Marse John died I clean fergot dis heah, 'twell I come 'long up heah wid Miss Marabel." He drew a discolored packet from his breast and handed it to the lawyer. "'Bout a monf ago Marse John say fo' me ter tek keer ob dis heah, en ef he die fust ter gib it ter de lawyer w'en he come ter settle 'bo't his property; but not 'twell den. Heah 'tis, suh!" The lawyer put his hat down and opened the packet, amid a second and deeper silence. It contained a miniature and chain; he examined the paper around it, and his hand came down upon the table again.

"Will you all remain, if you please?" His eyes sought me over their gold-rimmed spectacles. "I hold a paper written by the deceased which may materially alter the disposition of the property." There was a disturbed rustle, but I stood on the hearth-rug, thinking mainly of the look I had received from Marabel's eyes. "This is practically the will of John Davenport Penwinkle, witnessed by two persons, who are probably both alive. One is Peter Weeden—"

"Dat's me!" interpolated Peter.

"The other is William Johnson—"

"Dat's him! Mistah Billy Johnson, what carries de mail. He come ter de gate one mawnin', en Marse John he mek me fotch him in while he write his name on sumpin. He say, 'twarn't anybody's business nohow, whut he write. En Mistah Billy he put his name, and den I make my mark yonder."

"As Mr. Penwinkle was known by me to have been sane at the time, the will is certainly valid," said Lawyer McCrae. "It reads thus:

"I, John Davenport Penwinkle, being of sound mind, do make the following disposition of my property, and have my own

reasons for not placing this in a lawyer's hands, as I have lived for fifty years unknown, and prefer to die so. This shall stand as my last Will and Testament.

"To my nephew, Harrison Davenport Penwinkle, who seems disinclined to take life seriously, I bequeath the bas-relief over my chair, as a reminder that material consistencies are often signposts to mortal failures.

"The inclosed miniature, with the future care of my servant, Peter Weeden, together with the entire bulk of my property, now held in trust by Donald McCrae, I leave to my cousin, Marabel Penwinkle Lee, without restriction.

"(Signed) JOHN DAVENPORT PENWINKLE,
PETER WEEDEN (*his X mark*),
WILLIAM JOHNSON."

A blanker silence.

Then a swarm of murmurs like bees about my ears. I had been thrilled to exaltation by the possibility of Marabel being almost mine. Now I was stunned into dumbness by seeing her swept out of my reach by a fortune. In the midst of it she came hastily to the foreground, a flame on either cheek, and horror in her eyes.

"I shall never touch one penny of Uncle Penwinkle's money," she said tensely, her hand thrown out to McCrae in appeal. "I thought him poor, and only tried to help him to be more comfortable, and—and because Cousin Harry had taken the brunt of it for years, and I was a relation, too. When he told me he had money, I thought he imagined it. Then something he said made me commence to believe him. I knew that if it were true the money would go to Cousin Harry, for he is his nephew and has taken a son's place for so long. Why, he has taken care of Cousin John, made sacrifices for him"—I started to stop her, but she waved me aside—"the only one of the connection who has done anything for him. He has given him time and consideration and care. The money belongs to him—all of it—every penny! Anything else would be monstrous!"

Heavens, how beautiful she looked!

A murmur of acquiescence followed her.

"Of course you'll contest it, Harry?" said Mrs. Marius.

Contest it! I contest Marabel's

right to anything life could offer her! I laughed a little as I went to her.

"Marabel, the money is yours by every right, and I am more glad for your sake than I can tell you. Do not trouble yourself about it now. As neither of us expected it, neither can be disappointed. Besides, I was much more intimate with the imp as a probable prospect."

"Poor boy; it is outrageous!" murmured Mrs. Marius; but all Marabel said was:

"I shall not touch a penny of it—not a penny!"

Cousin Marius regained his equilibrium in the atmosphere of dollars and cents, and approached Marabel encouragingly.

"Come, come, my dear! It's hard on Harry, but it can't be helped, and I'll take my oath you're the handsomest Penwinkle on record."

"Mercy, listen to your father!" murmured Mrs. Marius to Angelique.

It was growing awkward, and I suggested to McCrae that the proceedings should be curtailed, and that he should await Miss Lee's directions in the matter. There was an immediate lifting of voices in congratulation, and Mrs. Marius swept over to Marabel.

"My dear, we must see more of you! Why have you spent so much time away from us?"

"I have lived here all my life until the last two months," said Marabel. "I regret the money, and I shall not touch it. There must be some way by which it can be made over to its rightful owner."

Then she avoided my eyes, and bowed silently to one and another as they melted away into the late afternoon, amid a conflict of congratulation and condolence. The Penwinkles' purple car lingered in the road to get up its noise, while I strove with ghastly effort to express my joy over Marabel's acquisition of a fortune which swept her out of my reach. Presently it was over, and I returned alone to discover old Peter sitting disconsolately on the steps amid the drifting leaves. His hands were on his stick, and his

gray head lifted pathetically as I approached.

"Hit seems lak hit's mighty mixity, Mistah Harry. Might as well be daid ez not ter 'long nowhars."

I went in, cordially agreeing with Peter, who, according to my lights, was luckier than any one of us. I paused at the library door, chewing the bitter cud of this reflection, determined not to see Marabel again, and arguing against the inner and stronger urging that it would be cruel to leave her with no word of farewell; but cruel to whom?

Then I heard sobbing.

Heaven surely proved the fallibility of masculine armor when it forged the weapon of a woman's tears. Marabel crouched in the great chair, her arms on its arm, her face hidden and the miniature of her mother in her hands.

"Oh, mother, mother!" she moaned.

In spite of the smiling imp above her, I went forward and looked down at the miniature, which had gray eyes like Marabel's, and ruddy hair and a white throat.

"Don't, Marabel," I remarked, with originality. "Don't, child! You cannot help the money, but now you can stop working and—and enjoy"—I looked around vaguely—"yourself."

There came only a sobbing whisper. "I have no one! Oh, mother!"

Presently the sobbing ceased, and I said: "Tell me about the miniature."

"It is grandmother's," said Marabel's muffled voice. "She was engaged to marry Cousin John—so mother told me—and he went to Australia and worked, oh, so hard, and while he was gone she was forced to marry against her will, and when he returned he found her dying of a broken heart. He came here and never went out again, and nobody knew that he had money—until he told me. Once I dressed up in one of her gowns mother had kept, and it made him oh, so happy, that I did it again, and gradually he grew to talk to me as if I were she, and—and toward the last he seemed to think so. It made him

glad—the only brightness he had found in fifty years—think of it! Was it wrong? But the money—I never thought of that, except that it would be all yours—every cent!" A little sob shook her again, and she leaned back in the chair wearily. No one—except the imp—saw my lips touch a ring of bright hair in farewell.

"Marabel, I am going away," I said tritely.

"Because I have the money?" she asked, twisting her handkerchief between her fingers.

"You know that I am more than glad that you have the money—for your sake; but—good heavens, child, have you forgotten that I love you?"

"No," said Marabel faintly, "but I thought you had."

I stood resolutely away from the great chair and faced the imp.

"That one knowledge consumes me. I think of nothing else. I live upon nothing but the love of you! But I shall never ask you to marry me now—now that you are a rich woman, and I am poor. The world and life lie before you. You can choose your way, Marabel, and it is far better that you refused to listen to me three months ago."

Marabel slipped out of the chair and stood.

"When you go, Harry, I shall have no one in the world," she said softly.

"Oh, I intend to remain in the world," I said grimly. "But don't you think it would be kinder of you to make it easy for me—at least easy as you can? Seeing that I know you cannot love me, nothing can be particularly easy."

"I never said"—she commenced, but I stopped her.

"Don't! I know how far a quixotic idea about returning the money could lead you, but I have no intention of allowing you to make a move in any such direction for the cursed stuff."

Marabel came nearer, and touched my arm. It was not so easy to maintain a show of strength and indifference with her eyes scanning me.

"For the last time, Cousin Harry

—will you take Cousin Penwinkle's money?"

"Never!" I said. "And now, as we have disposed of that subject, suppose we say good-bye?"

Marabel pointed to the portrait of Uncle Penwinkle and then to the miniature in her hand.

"You are like him," she murmured, "and he said that I am like her. She—she died broken-hearted because she loved him so. My mother, too!"—suddenly she covered her face, and a rosy wave swept to her brow. "You will not take the money—you say you will not ask me now—then, oh, Harry, take me! Take me!"

Her hands flew out to me, a lovely glow illuminating her. "If you leave me now, as I once had to leave you, I shall die!"

I drew Marabel's dear hands upward and scanned her face, incredulous of that discovery which nearly stopped my heart's beating because of tumultuous joy.

"You love me? Let it be nothing less! You love me, Marabel? Me? It is not that you want to give me the money?"

Then her whisper, tremulous and precious, reached me. "I waited night after night behind the firs, only to see you pass."

The dead leaves were blowing around the desolate house and old Peter crooning without, while I took Marabel to my heart under the very eyes of the imp that for so long had grinned at the inconsistencies of man, over the head of Uncle Penwinkle.



TO A BON VIVANT

OH, rich autumnal tinting of his nose,
What radiant, rosy-tinted dreams you bring,
Of vine-clad slopes and autumn vintaging,
And ripe grape fragrance, sweeter than the rose!
Dreams of old pagan days, when Bacchus goes
All garlanded with vines, or lolls to sing,
And, singing, slumbers, till long shadows fling
Their cool arms eastward and the stars unclose.

What tall, moist beakers have you lingered in—
Pagan proboscis of the sunset tip!
But beer cools not while fancy's fingers spin
A frail glass stem, and each remembered sip
Warms you with blushes for some olden sin,
You beacon-light of too-good-fellowship!

MARGARET LEE ASHLEY.



JUNIOR PARTNER—Your caller looked like a Russian.
SENIOR PARTNER—He was.

"What was his name?"

"I don't know; he sent in his card, but the office-boy carelessly broke it off about a foot from the end."

LA FOLIE D'UN RÊVE

Par Paul Cervières

QUAND M. Marbelle, se penchant sur l'épaule de sa femme, eut murmuré: "Ma chère amie, il est deux heures!" Mme Marbelle se leva, serra quelques mains qui se tendaient à elle, échangea un long regard avec le vicomte d'Angély et, après avoir salué le maître et la maîtresse de maison, sortit suivie de son mari.

Une demi-heure après, un fiacre les déposait à leur porte.

Dans la chambre, une vieille bonne sommeillait près d'un berceau.

— Vous pouvez monter chez vous, Victoire, murmura la jeune femme en faisant glisser sur ses bras rosés les longs gants blancs.

La vieille femme s'était levée; sur le seuil de la porte, elle se retourna:

— Bébé dort; du reste, je dois dire à Madame qu'il a été fort sage!

— C'est un beau petit homme, murmura M. Marbelle, dont le visage s'éclaira; vous entendez, ma chère amie?

La jeune femme ne répondit pas. Les bras nus, ses blanches épaules émergeant d'un fouillis de gaze et de dentelle, elle s'était laissée tomber sur un divan, en proie à un accablement délicieux. La tête renversée et les yeux mi-clos, elle revivait en un rêve très doux chaque instant de cette brillante soirée, qui n'avait été qu'une suite d'hommages rendus à sa beauté.

Les accords harmonieux d'une valse à la mode chantaient en elle; elle revit la longue enfilade des salons et crut respirer encore la fine senteur des lys et des roses.

Dans la chambre voisine, M. Marbelle allait et venait; la jeune femme n'entendait pas, un frémissement de

bonheur l'agitait, elle se disait qu'elle était belle et cela était délicieux.

Certes, depuis longtemps, elle avait conscience de sa radieuse beauté. Quelle est donc la femme qui l'ignorait? Mais, ce soir seulement, elle en avait compris toute la puissance, puisqu'elle l'avait fait, elle, femme d'un modeste commerçant, trôner en reine au milieu d'une société élégante et choisie. Et parmi tous ces hommes pressés autour d'elle, parmi tous ces hommes qui semblaient se disputer ses sourires, ses regards, un se dessinait nettement à ses yeux ravis, un revenait sans cesse à sa pensée charmée: le vicomte d'Angély.

Ce n'était pas la première fois qu'elle le rencontrait, ce jeune et spirituel vicomte; maintes fois déjà, elle s'était trouvée en sa présence, et l'empressement plein de respect que, tout d'abord, il lui témoigna, les longs et doux regards dont il la couvrit, puis, s'enhardissant, les soupirs éloquents et les pressions de main trop accentuées pour être celles d'un indifférent, lui révélèrent bientôt le sentiment tout d'amour qu'elle avait fait naître en lui.

Mme Marbelle ressentit à cette découverte une impression tout à fait dépourvue de courroux. En digne fille d'Eve, elle se sentit fière d'une telle remarque; mais, tête folle et romanesque, elle rêva trop loin. Doucement, elle eût pu repousser ces hommages, elle ne fit que les encourager, et l'élégant vicomte s'enhardit si bien qu'un soir, à la faveur d'une valse animée, il lui déclara qu'il l'adorait.

Il l'adorait, en effet! Comment ne pas aimer cette splendide créature de vingt-cinq ans à peine, divinement jo-

lie avec ses grands yeux bleu sombre et son teint d'une transparence toute enfantine?

Il s'était dit cela dès le premier regard qu'il posa sur elle, et quand un ami, lui désignant un homme petit, rougeaud et d'aspect assez vulgaire, eût murmuré: "Mon cher, voici le mari de cette ravissante créature!" il resta abasourdi; mais, revenant vite à lui, il déclara: "Vénus à Vulcain, l'antiquité est satisfaite!" Le beau vicomte dit cela, en pensant qu'il pourrait bien, à son tour, jouer le rôle d'Adonis.

Un regard jeté sur une glace voisine, qui lui refléta sa silhouette élégante, lui suffit; il sourit en relevant d'un geste familier sa fine et soyeuse moustache blonde.

Pourquoi pas!... N'était-il pas le charmeur, le beau d'Angély, comme on l'appelait, l'homme à bonnes fortunes!

— Je connais les femmes, disait-il quelquefois, et le jeu qu'il faut pour chacune!

Malheureusement, tout en exagérant un peu, le vicomte disait vrai. Des expériences assez nombreuses lui avaient permis d'acquérir une certaine habileté dans cette jolie spécialité. Peu de temps lui suffit pour saisir l'état d'âme de Mme Marbelle.

Vivant dans un bien-être aisé, qui, comparé à la vie luxueuse de quelques amies, devenait médiocrité, la jeune femme, d'abord heureuse et confiante, devint bientôt envieuse et maussade.

Elle compara aux fêtes somptueuses où on l'invitait les quelques petites soirées qu'elle donnait à son tour; elle songea que sa robe de bal, qui, certainement, sortait de chez un couturier à la mode, avait droit à tous ses égards, puisqu'elle lui devait faire la saison entière, tandis que ses amies ne les comptaient pas; enfin, que de riches équipages les ramenaient à leur hôtel, alors que, dans un affreux fiacre, elle regagnait son modeste appartement de la rue de Rome.

De suite, M. Marbelle s'aperçut du changement qui s'opérait en elle; rien de plus clairvoyant que l'amour! L'excellent homme qu'il était vit alors le danger que courait leur bonheur; douce-

ment, avec mille précautions, comme on traite un enfant malade, il essaya d'éloigner sa chère idole de ces lieux, où elle ne puisait que l'envie et la jalousie.

Peut-être y fût-il parvenu si, juste à ce moment critique, le vicomte ne leur eût été présenté.

De suite, le jeune homme devina à quelles idées, quels désirs, quelles hésitations la jeune femme était en butte; de suite aussi, il analysa les avantages qu'un tel état moral pouvait offrir à sa ligne de conduite, et, pour arriver au dénouement qu'il rêvait, il n'hésita pas à jeter par des mots, qui, sous leur semblant de naïveté, cachaient un sens toujours piquant, parla nomenclature qu'il fit des nombreux plaisirs, apanage de la fortune qu'elle n'avait pas et qu'elle désirait si ardemment, par des comparaisons, des remarques qui allaient droit au cœur de la jeune femme et en ravivaient alors les désirs un instant calmés, à jeter dans cet esprit déjà faussé le doute et la dissipation.

Mme Marbelle respira à tel point cet air empoisonné que tous les égards, toute la patience, toute la tendre sollicitude d'un mari qui l'adorait ne triomphèrent pas de sa résistance. Il souffrait en silence, le pauvre homme, et, ce soir encore, lui seul savait son martyre, lorsque sa femme, au bras du vicomte, était passée devant lui sans le voir, uniquement occupée de ce que murmurait le bellâtre!

Longtemps son regard les suivit et, tout à coup, plus rien: ils avaient disparu.

Il se sentit alors horriblement malheureux et seul; des larmes lui montèrent aux yeux; par un suprême effort, il les refoula, et là-bas, dans le petit boudoir tout tendu de broché rose, le vicomte d'Angély serrait dans les siennes la petite main de Mme Marbelle. Pour la trentième fois, peut-être, il répétait les mêmes paroles: "Décidément, c'était un rêve, la merveilleuse jeune femme qu'elle était n'appartenait pas à cet homme qu'il apercevait au loin... elle, la grâce, la beauté, la jeunesse!... allons donc! Certes, M. Marbelle était un homme loyal et bon, mais combien en était-il de jeunes,

d'élégants qui eussent été trop heureux de mettre à ses pieds nom et fortune? Est-ce que cela ne se voyait pas tous les jours, avec des créatures moins superbement douées!... Et tenez, qu'avait donc qu'elle n'eût pas celle qui les recevait aujourd'hui, cette baronne de Rigny? Moins de jeunesse, moins de beauté; quant à la fortune, c'était connu, le baron l'avait épousée par amour!"

"Épousée par amour!" Ces trois mots ne quittaient pas l'esprit de Mme Marbelle, et quand le vicomte, baisant passionnément cette fois la petite main qui ne se défendait pas, reprit de sa belle voix bien timbrée: "Madame, madame, pourquoi ne vous ai-je pas connue plus tôt!..." la jeune femme sentit gronder en elle une sourde colère. Oui, pourquoi ne l'avait-elle pas connu plus tôt?

Il l'attira à lui et, comme elle se penchait, elle aperçut son mari, là-bas, à l'entrée du grand salon. Debout, il s'appuyait à l'embrasement de la porte, dans une attitude à la fois lasse et triste. Elle éprouva comme un remords, qui allait décroissant à mesure qu'elle le détaillait, si laid, si vulgaire, si vieux déjà. Près d'elle, presque à genoux, un sourire plissant sa lèvre moqueuse, le vicomte attendait. Mme Marbelle ferma les yeux et tendit à son baiser son joli front frissonnant.

"Épousée par amour!" Maintenant, toujours étendue sur le divan, elle répétait ces mots.

C'était vrai pourtant: la baronne de Rigny, autrefois Mlle Valentine Regnault, avait été épousée par amour. Elle avait, aujourd'hui, un hôtel à Paris, un château en province, une horde de serviteurs et un mari charmant. Qu'avait-elle, elle, reine de beauté?

Ah! folle, folle qu'elle était! Com-

ment avait-elle pu s'unir ainsi, comment!

Plus colère maintenant, elle se rappelait le temps de ses fiançailles. C'est qu'elle était heureuse, elle, la petite modiste, d'épouser ce commerçant aisé; elle aussi, aux yeux de sa famille, aux yeux des amies de ce temps-là, passait pour avoir fait un beau mariage.

Un beau mariage! Elle eût un sourire plein d'amertume.

Et juste à ce moment l'enfant pleura dans son petit nid blanc. Elle eût un mouvement de colère, elle toujours si tendre, et comme elle restait encore à demi couchée, M. Marbelle entra dans la chambre, se pencha sur le berceau et, saisissant dans ses mains maladroites le joli baby qui pleurait, se mit à le bercer doucement.

La jeune femme releva la tête, elle vit son mari qui, avec des précautions infinies, tenait l'enfant et baisait son joli front nimbé d'or, et le groupe que formaient ce gros homme et ce délicat enfant blond, qui eût peut-être fait sourire l'élégant vicomte, l'émut jusqu'aux larmes.

Peu à peu, ses traits contractés se détendirent, son regard s'adoucit, sa bouche quitta le pli amer qui la faisait méchante, et comme M. Marbelle murmurait: "Ne pleure plus, mon mignon, ne pleure plus, tu vas fatiguer ta maman, ta jolie petite maman!" Mme Marbelle se leva, hésitante et le front baissé, courut à son mari, et comme il la regardait, éperdu de la voir en larmes, elle, comprenant toute la folie de son rêve, comparant dans une vision très nette, là-bas, l'amour violent, mais passager et dégradant, et là, le devoir, doublé du vrai, du paisible, de l'éternel bonheur, pencha sa tête ravissante sur son épaule en murmurant:

— Voulez-vous m'embrasser aussi, mon ami?... pour me consoler!

ETHEL—Wouldn't you like to be a celebrated writer and be paid a dollar a word?

JESS—Well, if I were I would write a story with a man in it who stuttered.

BALLADE OF FUTURE TIMES

IN years to come when we are dead
 They'll have new things we shall not share;
 They'll laugh at these our days, then fled,
 They'll have winged ships to cleave the air,
 And lotions that will grow new hair—
 Things now to which we have small clue.
 Comforts they'll have at which we'd stare:
In love they will have nothing new.

Why shines aurora overhead,
 Why sun-spots come and go, and where
 The road lies which so long misled
 Our polar wights who ice-fields dare—
 Their wise men all these shall declare,
 And how hay-fever to subdue;
 They'll know all which is our despair:
In love they will have nothing new.

They'll ask the Martians why they're red;
 The stubborn circle they will square,
 And cure the ills that now we dread.
 They'll deem our life a small affair;
 Diamonds they'll make beyond compare;
 Have better ways to bake and brew,
 New things to eat, to drink, to wear:
In love they will have nothing new.

ENVOY

Prince, though a thousand things which ne'er
 We've known to these folk shall accrue,
 A fig for it all! Why should we care?—
In love they will have nothing new!

HAYDEN CARRUTH.



IN THE FIFTH AVENUE PARADE

RESPECTABLE DEACON—I wish that young Canon Mayberry weren't obliged to preach to such a small congregation.
 FRIVOLOUS WIDOW—So do I. Every time he said "Dearly beloved" this morning I felt as if I had received a proposal.

THE ROMANCE AT HOLLYWOOD COLLEGE

By Anne O'Hagan

MISS TORRINGTON, on a day when wisdom had been born with great travail in her soul, had determined so to apportion the activities of her life as to leave no leisure for remembrances. A strong constitution had enabled her to do this without paying for forgetfulness by physical collapse, and several generations of good breeding had saved her from the appearance of feverishness and bustle which crowded days deplorably produce in most women. At Hollywood College, to whose renown she contributed by being the earliest prophet of a certain comet, she was regarded as the luckiest possible model for the students. The quality of her mind was fine, her industry notable; moreover, she was beautiful after a rather statuesque, un-aging fashion, and her clothes and her manner had a distinction which was held to be not only worthy of emulation, but provocative of it as well. To be sure, an observer who piqued himself upon his cleverness once described her as a woman whose face was saved from acknowledged tragedy only by means as strenuous as those which save some women's from the admission of age. But for the most part the cleverness of Hollywood was not psychologic.

On this particular Thursday evening in April an unusual failure to dovetail her engagements had left Miss Torrington with an unscheduled hour upon her hands. By no chance could the Thursday evening influx of visitors begin before eight; even the most eager of freshmen had learned by April that Miss Torrington's "eight until eleven"

was to be interpreted accurately. Her dinner guest had failed her and her own appetite had rebelled against more than twenty minutes at the table. She had wandered aimlessly through her small establishment—the elegance of her housekeeping on the first floor of Mrs. West's square, old, colonial house was one of the joys of Hollywood—she had retouched the flowers in the bowls of brass and iridescent glass, she had poked the aromatic wood upon the hearth, she had snuffed the candles and readjusted the curtains, until her unaccustomed fidgeting disgusted her. She had cut the pages of the new review and stared at them unseeingly. She had begun to play upon the piano, but some impish attendant of memory had made her sound the notes of a measure she had forbidden her fingers for a long time.

With a sudden gesture of determination she went into her study. She would face her situation, not try to evade it. Above the panel in the centre of her old mahogany desk there was a little illuminated text characteristic of her. "Resolve, and you are free," she read, and nodded. Nevertheless her hands shook a little as she inserted a key into one of the locked compartments. She drew forth a letter, stiff, heavy, new, unworn in its creases.

It was a proposal of marriage, dignified, honest, admiring, from the president of the big university in the State. She stared at it a long time, considering what it meant as she had half considered all day—an honest admiration, a dignified affection, an intellectual companionship stimulating and de-

lightful, a fuller human experience than any unmarried woman might have, an existence in the aristocracy of scholarship. She held her empty hand out as though to weigh against the letter all that a refusal would mean to her. Then her eyes turned grudgingly toward a panel in her desk and dwelt for a rebellious second upon an inlaid rose that did not match the others in the border. Then she yielded and, with lips a little gray, leaned forward and pressed the rose. The secret panel that some old artificer in woods had pleased himself to make two centuries before slid back, and the past that Miss Torrington had arranged her whole life to ignore fell forward in a packet of letters and papers.

Her own picture was there, showing a face as proud as the one Hollywood knew, but brilliant with an ardor and a sweetness that the college had never seen. The man's face that had lain against it in the recess was eager, winning; the young head was poised debonairly as if its owner had set forth to conquer the world with a laugh and a lute and a rose; the eager eyes, the young mouth, smiled confidently, contagiously. She held the card away from her at arm's length and she groaned. The letters she did not touch, but some newspaper clippings she unfolded and looked at bitterly. The roughly engraved caricature of the young face looked back at her; beside it was printed a woman's, supercilious and pretty: it seemed to Miss Torrington that she could see in the reproduced photograph all the mingling of cold vanity and tempestuous impulse which made some women the inspiration of the sin and misery of the whole world.

The printed story she knew by heart—how the great Western senator had been doubly deceived by his young secretary and protégé. Oh, it was a hideous story enough of a forged signature, of a woman's shamed, hard-wrung confession of a half-guilty intrigue—ugh! Alma Torrington shook with the rage and the repulsion which had driven her nearly mad ten years be-

fore when the newspapers one morning had opened upon her unprepared eyes that tale of the treachery of the man to whom she was engaged.

She pushed the papers back into the recess and slid the panel forward; again the inlaid rose hid the record of misery and shame. She drew a sheet of her crested paper out of a pigeon-hole and began to write.

"Dear Doctor Donald." She paused to dally half shrinkingly with the notion of a more intimate beginning. Then she heard the heavy fall of the knocker against the door; she glanced at the clock—it was not yet quite eight. She turned again to her writing, but heavy steps followed the maid's light, tapping ones down the corridor. A breathless presentiment of horror came upon her, and she rose to meet whatever was to appear. The curtains slid back, the servant's voice mumbled a name and a man stood staring at her across the orderly, spacious beauty of the room—a man whose pallor was the unmistakable white of cells, whose face was deeply lined, but from whose eyes glowed some unquenchable, sullen fire of pride and resentment.

They looked at each other, and silence seemed to smother them until, with a plash like a heavy stone falling into some rippleless pool, her name fell from his lips:

"Alma!"

Still she did not speak nor move. Then the knocker fell heavily once more and the clock began to chime the hour. She looked wildly about. A hooded cape she sometimes wore in crossing the campus lay on the sofa. She caught it, threw open the long window upon the back piazza, and made a frantic gesture toward it. And while the servant drew near to announce the first of the evening visitors, two stumbling figures fled through the soft, dark April night across the garden, through the hedge and out into the quiet village road.

There was a low stone wall about one of the great Hollywood estates on which, during the ten months of the

year when the owners were testing the merits of their other residences, much of the humbler courtship of the town proceeded. Often on her late afternoon walks Miss Torrington had smiled with amused tolerance upon the couples perched along it, like birds upon a telegraph wire. Now she paused in her breathless flight at a spot where the darkness seemed densest and the equidistant arc lights only intensified the circle of blackness.

"Now tell me," she whispered fiercely as she sank upon the broad top of the wall, "tell me—why did you come?"

The hood of her cloak fell back; her lifted face shone white and wild in the darkness; the tragedy that her eyes had veiled so long stared nakedly forth in her upward look.

"I came," he answered doggedly, unemotionally, "to tell you that I never did that thing. I will not go away until you believe me. It has kept me going all these years in prison—don't shrink at the word, I've been through the thing—the thought that I should make you listen and believe. I tell you I did not do it!"

"You mean—?" Her whisper broke and floated away among the spring odors.

"I did not forge that signature. I did not do it. Do you hear me? You've got to believe me—got to! Me, mind you, and because I tell you it. Just my word you've got to take. I did not forge that signature!"

Rough, insistent, monotoned, his voice carried a fierce emotion which no vehemence could have conveyed. The tense attitude of the woman, her eyes strained upward through the darkness, suddenly relaxed.

"That!" she cried, with a gesture of repudiation, of contempt. "That! What do I care for that?"

He stared stupidly down upon her for an instant. Then, as though suddenly unnerved, he sank down beside her.

"What do you mean? What do you mean?"

"Do you suppose I believed that?"

she cried. "Do you suppose I care about that? What difference—? Oh, you dull, you dull—you Man! Crime? If you had told me you were innocent, would I not have believed you? If you had told me you were guilty, would I not have striven for you, helped you, waited—saved you at last? Oh, dull, dull——"

"Then in God's name, Alma," he entreated her, "why did you make no sign? No sign, not a word, not a line, not a look! Oh, that was bitter, that was the hell of it. And I would have suffered twenty hells rather than plead with you then, rather than tell you I was innocent. You should have known it, I said, as I would have known the truth of you; and so you should have, so you should have. I—a forger? Why, why did you treat me so?"

"You seem to forget"—her voice was cold, controlled again, like the voice her idle pupils sometimes knew—"that the same paper which announced your arrest told of your—your—affair with that woman!"

It was his turn to look at her with amazement, to echo her "that!"

"That! What else? You—engaged to me, and your letters to her published there in that same paper. She your 'dear lady,' she your 'royal mistress,' she your 'madame most gracious and well beloved'—oh, did you think that I could forget that? From you? And you made no sign, gave no explanation. I dare say I might have believed you!"

"And for an idle, silly flirtation, masquerade of hearts, a flower or two, a hand pressure, a conservatory-set scene to flatter a woman's vanity—oh, have the worst! a kiss to flutter a man's pulse—for that you threw me over, let me go through that damnation without one sign? You, so pitiful! Oh, it's unbelievable—and you pretend you would have forgiven the black dishonor, the disgrace, the crime, if I had been guilty of it! For I was not, I tell you. Tomorrow you'll know—tomorrow all the world will know for whom she ruined me, to

shield whom she condemned me to those years, that shame. But tonight you must believe me, me myself!"

She brushed aside his earnestness.

"And I would have, I would have forgiven the crime," she cried. "What was that to me? But the other— Oh, I loved you and you could play at love with another woman!"

They had risen and stood looking at each other, man and woman, the irreconcilable. Their mutually incomprehensible standards of honor lay

balanced in the great scales of destiny. Pride, loneliness, the desolation of life, waited to engulf them. Then nature broke something in the woman's heart; she threw out her hands with a sob.

"I cannot bear it," she whispered. "I cannot bear it. I am so lonely!"

And nature woke the protector in the man.

"Alma!" he cried, and drew her, shaken and defeated, into the circle of his arms.



IN GADARA

DO you recall, sweet, how the spring
Came up the glade of Gadara,
With bourgeoning and blossoming
As in the gardens of the Shah—
How morning from her gold-bright wing
Flushed height and depth in Gadara?

How all the poppy beacons flared,
And every rathe anemone;
How all the lovely lupins shared
The heaven's turquoise clarity—
And blush-fair oleanders dared
Their banners toss—a rosy sea?

And, sweet, do you remember, too,
The bird voice in the carob bough—
Some magic minstrel hid from view,
Vow lifting after lyric vow?—
A troubadour who knew the clue
To ope love's heart-gate—when and how?

Blithe, very blithe, the world seemed then—
(O golden day in Gadara)
The sky that leaned above the glen
So like your eyes that wooed me; ah,
Would we might live it o'er again,
That day of days in Gadara!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



WHEN a woman starts an idle rumor it at once ceases to be idle.

ENDEMIC

By Gouverneur Morris

But soon a wonder came to light
That showed the rogues they lied:
The man recovered of the bite—
The dog it was that died.

FOR a wonder, the cholera scare in the plains that season was worse than its bite. There had been enough heat, irritability and fear to warrant a decimation of the entire population; but for some reason best known to itself, the cholera hung fire and remained endemic. Still there were many deaths, as Tyson duly reported to his paper in Calcutta and to a girl in the hills. To the latter he wrote:

I cannot get away now. At any moment there may be big news. Eighteen died yesterday in Jongualla. And this morning a private in B Company went out in a cloud of suspicion. Stedman says dysentery and looks wise, but some of us think this is just a bluff to keep nerves quiet. I have annexed a terrier for you. Private Hawkins brought him to me last night in a bread-sack, and said that he had come by him honestly. The heat is frightful. In fact, it's just as hot as it was this time last year and the year before. There is a Cingalese hanging about here with a big ruby in the rough. I can answer for the color. He wants eighty pounds for it, and it looks cheap. I'm no judge of stones, but if you've got that much to spare you might take a chance. We are all working hard to keep amused. Colonel Maud is giving a dinner and card party tonight. I don't like him; he's an old rake, but I'm going. . . . When am I coming up? I don't know. In three weeks the heat should break up. If we can keep the sickness quiet till then I can get away. Tell me, is it cool and shady on the Khabool road? What are you reading? Has the yellow pony been fired? You should have the callas taken up, separated and replanted. I shot a wonderful bird the other day, with a black and gold breast almost as soft as eider. Would you like it for a bonnet or something? Brown & Helturing are making a collection of my stories to be issued Christmas-time. If

they go—but it's too hot to expect that. When the fates strike up on their fiddles heat dances with despair, cold with hope. The colonel has just galloped up to his bungalow and rushed in. Something must have happened or he wouldn't have galloped. Will you wait a moment, please, while I get the news?

Tyson took up his helmet and stepped through a window to the burnt clay veranda. A very sweaty native, looking like a mass of old bedclothes, rose at his approach and bowed over and over again.

"May it please your charitable-ness—"

"Who are you? I remember. You are Jouglot. How are you? You've had cholera in Logput. Family well?"

"We come about a tiger," said Jouglot. "Such a tiger has been unknown until this time. Look, we have made a tracing of his print upon this cloth. Already he has taken two bullocks and a child."

"That's a big cat," said Tyson quietly. "Where is he?"

"As your charitableness knows," said Jouglot, "we dwell with our wife and children in an outlying house."

"He's nosing round your place, is he?" said Tyson. "Tell me this—has there been any cholera in your house?"

Jouglot wriggled uncomfortably.

"The fact is too publicly known," he said, "for me to lie to your esteemed patronship. We have lost a very small child by the cholera—but there could be brought a tent to be set at a distance from the house."

"Who else has been sick in your house?"

"I cannot lie," said Jouglot. "We have lost our eldest and the sister of our wife's mother. But she was an old

woman upon whom the sickness sat lightly."

"Have you reported to the doctor?"

"May it please your charitableness, we have but one house, and the doctor would cause it to be burned. It is well known that our youngest and our eldest and the sister of our wife's mother died in three ways. When the well-beam became dislodged and fell, our youngest, who was building a temple of pebbles and marigolds, was crushed. When the sister of our wife's mother was reaching up to pull plantains she trod upon Khraib, who bit her in the heel so that she doubled and died. Our eldest——"

"That will do," said Tyson; "I will give you an answer in the morning. Have you seen the tiger?"

"Twice," said Jougnot. "But he is rather an elephant than a tiger, being vast and terrible and astute."

Tyson crossed the white, quivering road to the colonel's bungalow.

"Hello, Tyson, come in," called the colonel.

"I saw you ride up, colonel. Any news that you can give out?"

"I'm saving it for tonight," said the colonel. "But I'll tell you if you won't divulge."

"You don't look as if it were bad news," said Tyson. "You—you look as if you'd been ordered to the hills."

"Better," said the colonel; "I'm going to be married."

Colonel Maud's quick eye detected an expression that was not enthusiasm curve about the corners of Tyson's mouth.

"Look here, Tyson," he said, "I know you're a purist and all that. A man can't cover his reputation, and mine's bad about—about women, but I'll be a good husband to her, and I'm not so damned old."

Tyson remembered that Colonel Maud had been a good husband once before. But he did his best to smile pleasantly.

"I was taken aback," he said. "I—well, somehow you're not the sort of man whose engagement one expects to hear of, colonel." He laughed. "But as long as it isn't my sis-

ter"—he held out his hand—"I hope you'll both be very happy. Truly I do. Who is she?"

"Marion Paul," said Colonel Maud.

The smile lingered on Tyson's face, and he finished shaking hands with the colonel.

"Marion Paul," he said. He drew a deep breath, and the letter which he had thrust in an unfinished state into his breast-pocket cracked.

"Funny," he said, "I was just writing to her." He pulled out the letter. "I must add a paragraph of—congratulations."

"You look white," said the colonel; "will you have a peg?"

"Thanks," said Tyson.

"Do you mind if I don't join you? I can't drink; I mean I must not. A man who doesn't take care of himself up to my age has to be careful. I can't afford to get sick now—can I?"

"Not very well," said Tyson. He poured some Scotch whisky into a long glass and filled it up with warm soda-water. "Here's how." He gulped down two or three inches of the stuff. "Give me a cigarette, will you?"

"By the way," said the colonel, "there will be cards tonight. Would you rather play whist or poker?"

"Whist," said Tyson.

"I thought so; I've listed you to play with Farrallone, Connor and Stedman, if he can get off."

"Stedman ought not to sit up and play cards," said Tyson; "he needs every ounce of sleep and brains he's got just now."

"Good man, the doctor," said Colonel Maud; "he's fixed me up once or twice."

Tyson's gorge rose.

"But I'm sound as a bank," the colonel went on. "I tell you, Tyson, I feel rejuvenated. When a man wants a girl and——"

"Yes, the luck's with you, isn't it?" said Tyson. He finished his drink in three gulps. "Hope it lasts. I'm—I want to see Stedman a minute if I can find him. See you tonight."

A strong shudder seized Tyson as he crossed the road.

"My God!" he thought, "I'm young and I'm clean—and I'm done for. She—she—no, it isn't her fault. Damn him! the women run to him."

He stopped suddenly, thought a minute and started back to the colonel's bungalow. "It mustn't be allowed," he said.

"May I trouble you again, colonel. Thanks. It's like this. I've promised Miss Paul a tiger-rug. Jougnot—a man I've hunted with, good hunter, too—has got one out in his back—I mean in the jungle back of his house; hell of a big one. Don't want to miss the hunt, but rug's no affair of mine. Can't you get off tomorrow for a little hunt? Two days and a night. Get him sure. You send Miss Paul the rug and our compliments. Better do it; you need an outing."

"If nothing turns up," said the colonel, "I might get off. Is it far?"

"No, near Logput."

"They've had cholera there."

"Yes, but this is some miles from the village. We'll put up at Jougnot's. Turn the family out and all that."

"I believe I'll go," said the colonel, "but I can't be sure just yet. You understand. But you look as though you ought to be in bed. Feel bad?"

Tyson shook his head. "A little heat sick," he said. "We should start about three; there's sometimes a breath of cool then."

He went slowly from the colonel's to the doctor's. The doctor happened to be in. He was busy weighing out doses of opium.

"Stedman," said Tyson, "can you talk while you do that?"

"Yep," said Stedman; "what about?"

"It's just this," said Tyson; "I'm making a cholera story—not a newspaper story, but fiction—and I want facts. Suppose a man used bedding that someone had had cholera in, would he take it?"

"Medical faculty dispute the point," said Stedman. "But if I wanted to live I wouldn't try it."

"Suppose," said Tyson, "a man had to do it, and was at the same time

anxious to live, and in reach of precautions, what ones ought he to take?"

"It's largely a question of guts," said Stedman. "Do you want revolting details?"

"Yes," said Tyson, "I do."

The doctor talked steadily for five minutes, and Tyson took notes. "But you can't put these things in a story," he finished. "You're neither Zola nor a sewer."

"No," said Tyson, "but it helps to know all there is to know. Then if a man——"

"He would be as nearly immune as our present knowledge can make him. Cheer up, man, you look as if you were going to sleep in infected bedding yourself."

Tyson laughed rather dismally.

"Now that we are at it," he said, "explain to me how it is that an old debauchee like Colonel Maud pulls through season after season of cholera, while strong young men die?"

"I don't know," said Stedman, "unless he's so rotten that germs won't have anything to do with him. He's seen more cholera than any man in India. Lucky he don't take it. He'd go out like a blown match."

"Good deal of a wreck, I suppose," said Tyson.

"What can you expect?" said Stedman. "Think what he's been."

"Suppose," said Tyson, "you had a daughter, and the colonel asked you for her——?"

"I'd tell him to go to hell," said the doctor. "Why?"

"I promised not to tell," said Tyson, "but I will. He's going to be married. Don't say anything, please."

"No, of course not. Who?"

"He's going to tell everybody to-night—Marion Paul."

Stedman put down his scales for a moment and looked Tyson steadily in the eyes.

"Shoe pinch a little?"

Tyson returned the look without wavering.

"Good Lord! no—but it seems a pity."

"Damn shame," said the doctor.

"What is there about him that wins 'em so, doctor?"

"I don't know, unless it is that a woman isn't happy unless she's getting the better of rivals. A woman who could keep the colonel faithful to her would have good reason to wear feathers in her hat. I understand she's rich?"

"Very comfortable," said Tyson. He rose. "Believe we're playing at the same table tonight. Hope I get you for my partner."

"Hope so too," said the doctor. "Look here, man, you've had a drink. I smelled it when you came in. Cut 'em out. You can't afford to take chances this weather."

Jougnot's family had vacated their house in favor of Tyson and Colonel Maud and gone into camp at some distance in a grove of plantains. Tyson and the colonel sat in the open smoking, their helmets on the ground beside them, for the sun had set. It was cruelly hot, and the smell from the Jougnots' camp added to the discomfort. Tyson looked white and sick. Colonel Maud pulled out his watch and looked at it.

"Our truck ought to be up, Tyson," he said. "I believe I could turn in and sleep creditably."

"Something must have happened," said Tyson, "because my man Rama is always very exact. When Jougnot returns we'll send him out on the back trail. After all, this place isn't the easiest in the world to find."

"I'm hungry," said the colonel, "and sleepy."

"There's a lot of Jougnot's bedding inside," said Tyson. "You won't need much over you."

"Not this weather. But I prefer my own bedding. Listen, that's a horse."

"There ought to be two," said Tyson. "No, it is Rama; where's the black, I wonder?"

A lean native in a white turban and precious little else came out of the jungle, leading a pack-horse. When he saw Tyson he began to gesticulate and shrug his shoulders.

"Where's the black, Rama?" Tyson called.

Rama halted a few paces from them and began to bow vigorously.

"Worshipful," he said, "within three miles of this place a devil entered the black so that he broke his leading rope and went home. I pursued for an hour, and, although at no time did he hurry, I was unable to catch him. Thinking, therefore, that the rifles and cartridges, and even the food—though in this weather it is too hot to eat—were more important than the quilts, I gave up the attempt and hurried on."

"You ought to be kicked," said Tyson.

Rama grinned and bowed.

"I don't like to punish him, colonel," said Tyson. "It's the first time he ever failed me. Get those packs off, Rama, and give us something to eat."

An hour later, while Colonel Maud was finishing his smoke, Tyson and Jougnot went into the house to make up a couple of beds. The house was lighted by one battered lantern. Tyson shuddered every now and then like a man who has taken cold.

"This house is very filthy, Jougnot," he said.

"We have lived in it so long," explained Jougnot.

"Which are the quilts that—that they died in?"

"They are in the far corner, where they can do no harm."

"I'm going to sleep on them, as a favor to the Doctor Sahib. He has made me proof against cholera."

Jougnot disentangled the quilts and began to spread them.

"Put the green one on top," said Tyson; "it looks cleaner than the others."

Jougnot did as he was told.

"It was the one upon which our wife's mother's sister died," said Jougnot, giving it a pat.

"Are these other quilts clean?"

"The chocolate and the red have never been in contact with sickness. The brown was our father's bed, who died of the smallpox; but that was nearly two years ago."

"What filthy beasts you are, aren't you?" said Tyson.

"Yes, indeed," said Jougnot agreeably.

"Put the chocolate one on the floor and spread the red one over it. We must start a little after midnight."

Jougnot finished the bed-making, and, rising, laid his hand lightly on Tyson's shoulder.

"Sahib Tyson," he said, "we have hunted tiger together, and we are both brave men who do not fear death; but you are a young man, sahib, and the cholera is a strong sickness. Among the plantains the ground is dry and not hard. Do not sleep in this house."

Tyson laughed nervously.

"It's a—a bet, Jougnot," he said.

Jougnot pointed out of the door with his thumb.

"Does he know?" he said.

Tyson pulled a venomous-looking Mauser pistol from his hip-pocket.

"No," he said.

"Why threaten among friends," said Jougnot peacefully, "and who are we to ask for Tyson Sahib's reasons? Tell me this—does he lie down with death or do you?"

"To each his own fate," quoted Tyson enigmatically.

"Now we will go," said Jougnot; "it may be that our wife is already dead."

"What do you mean?"

"She has been sick five hours; but we have dosed her heavily with opium, so that her cries might not break in upon the peacefulness of the sahib's evening."

"I will come over and look at her," said Tyson promptly; "I have some medicine. Don't wait."

Jougnot bowed and went out.

When he was alone Tyson leaned against the wall of the house, breathing hard. He heard Colonel Maud calling to him, but did not answer.

Colonel Maud, having called twice to ask if the beds were ready without receiving an answer, emptied his pipe, placed it in his pocket, rose with a yawn and strolled toward the house. Coming near he heard a faint moaning, and broke into a run. He found Tyson

writhing on the floor like a thing that has been run over and received an injury to its spine. Colonel Maud's first thought was—"snake bite."

He knelt and took Tyson strongly by the shoulders. Tyson stopped writhing for a moment. His teeth were set, and his words came through them slowly, with a sputter of light froth.

"Get . . . out," he said. "This . . . house . . . full . . . cholera . . . brought you . . . purpose."

"Stuff!" said Colonel Maud. He lifted Tyson in his arms and laid him on the green bed. "He's got it right enough," he said to himself; "thought he looked sick yesterday." Aloud he said, "You've got a touch of colic," and he took a little medicine-case from his breast-pocket. Then he dosed Tyson with opium and sugar of lead, and later with opium and ratanhia.

In about an hour Tyson's jaws loosened and he felt no pain. Then he begged Colonel Maud to listen to him and afterward to go away.

"It's pretty bad, colonel," he finished.

"Yes, it's pretty bad," said the colonel; "so bad that I don't take it in, quite. But you've misjudged me, Tyson; I've got some good traits. Those were ugly stories, I know, about the way I treated my wife; but it didn't seem dignified to go about contradicting them. There was a good deal to be said on both sides. But she spread the stories and told her side. If my side had been told we would have had to figure in divorce proceedings. If you wish me to be specific, I may as well tell you that she was an intimate friend of your father's. But you didn't make a row when he married again, did you? No. It isn't fair, my boy, to judge by hearsay. But I forgive you, if that's what you want. In your right mind you wouldn't have tried to—to do what you did try. You were sick, and the heat blistered your moral sense—God! I thought we'd stopped that."

Colonel Maud dosed Tyson with sugar of lead and strychnine. "I wish I had ice," he thought.

"You must fight with your head, Tyson."

"I want to die."

Colonel Maud groaned.

"As a reparation, Tyson," he said, "I want you to try and pull through. I'm doing all I know for you, but you've got to help."

"There's nothing for me," said Tyson.

"Oh, yes, there is; it's your duty to live and, if I don't make her a good husband to put a bullet in me."

"You will make her a good husband," said Tyson. "You're as gentle as a woman, and forgiving. If she is not happy it will be her own fault."

An hour later he said, quite dispassionately but with real interest:

"Give me your candid opinion; do you think I will go to hell? I am terribly sorry for what I have done. Is that enough, do you think?"

"Plenty," said Colonel Maud in an assured voice. And later, "Look here, man, will you try to pull through or not?"

"I'm trying to try," said Tyson, "but it's no good. Make Jougnot and Rama dig a hole for me somewhere in the shade, and if it isn't too much trouble, you might say, 'God have mercy on him,' over me. Give my love to Farrallone and Stedman. Tell Stedman I'm sorry I revoked last night. I beg your pardon, but if you don't give me something I shall have to scream."

Colonel Maud dosed Tyson with opium.

"You've been awfully good to me," said Tyson presently. "Do you think it would be a travesty for us to shake hands?"

"Delighted, I'm sure," said the colonel.

They shook hands.

"By the way," said Tyson, "there's sixty-five pounds in a tin despatch-box locked up in my bungalow. Wish you'd take it and find a Cingalese that's hanging round Cantonement. He's got a nice ruby. He wants eighty pounds for it. But I'd like very much to give it to her for—for a wedding present. If he won't take the sixty-five—it's all I've got in the world—could—would you mind awfully making up the difference and telling her it was from me? Then there's a black-and-gold bird breast, cured with arsenic; she might like that. . . . If it's true that dying men know things, colonel, I can guarantee that no harm will come to you from this night's work. . . . How long have I been sick?"

"About five hours."

Tyson sighed.

"Well," he said, "I think I'll be going."

Jougnot appeared in the door.

"May it please your benevolence, our wife is dead, and Tyson Sahib said that he wished to start a little after midnight."

Among other things Colonel Maud found an unfinished letter in Tyson's pockets. When he had read it he burned it, but for a long time the concluding sentence remained in his memory:

The colonel has just galloped up to his bungalow and rushed in. Something must have happened, or he wouldn't have galloped. Will you wait a moment, please, while I get the news? . . .



APRIL

"HOW is it you are smiling, dear,
With both your eyes a-trickle?"
"Alas! 'tis all too soon, I fear,
To let my little Buds appear;
By now each restless prisoner,
Begins my foot to tickle;
And once to laugh, if I begin,
They know I cannot keep them in!"

JOHN B. TABB.

AUSTRALIA'S LARK

By Frances de Wolfe Fenwick

"**I**T might," said Texas. "If one had the good, working cheek," she added reflectively.

"No 'cheek' would be necessary," opined Boston reprovingly. "If one had the necessary self-possession, sufficient anxiety to ascertain exactly the average man's opinion of such a procedure and sufficient enterprise to put one's theories to the test, nothing could be simpler."

"That's what I said," retorted Texas unabashed.

Boston subsided with a sniff. I looked at Australia wonderingly. Australia had not spoken for fully three minutes, which is not Australia's way.

Australia is five-feet-eight, athletic, healthy, graceful, stately, large-eyed—all that a girl should be, in my opinion. (I am small, thin, dark and insignificant.) Texas is plump, blue-eyed, daring, mirthful, irrepressible. Boston is slender, courteous, psychological and very tailor-made.

We had met on a steamer bound for England, and had speedily formed a fast friendship. One night we were sitting on deck, earnestly discussing the time-honored problem: "Should a woman propose?"

"I don't know whether a woman *should* propose," Australia said at length, "but I know one woman who *did*. She proposed three times and was refused every time."

"And you call her a woman!" I cried in horror.

"Oh, but, Australia, you understand, don't you, that I was not referring to *that* sort of woman?"

"It was me—I mean I!" Australia placidly rejoined.

"You!"

"Oh, Australia, what rub——!"

"What in the world——?"

"Now, what is the matter with you all? Of course I know how funny it must sound; but, after all, why shouldn't I have proposed to three men if I wanted to? I have more to offer an average man than he has to offer me. And why shouldn't I offer it?—that is, if I feel like it. I did feel like proposing, but—this will puzzle you a bit, I expect—I did *not* feel like being accepted. In fact, I don't know what I should have done if one of them had accepted me, for I was engaged already."

Texas got her breath first. "Australia, I thought I would do more for a lark than any girl living, but I take off my hat to you. You're it!"

"I don't believe Australia viewed it as a lark," said Boston reflectively. "I think I understand her better than you do. It was the psychological experiment that appealed to her. She wanted to see what the effect would be. I know exactly why she did it."

"You're both right, ladies," Australia laughed. "I did it for a lark and I did it for an experiment. Do you want to hear all about it? I knew you would. I'll begin at the very beginning, and if I get long-winded and tiresome—well, I know you'll stop me, anyway. In the first place, as I have told you several times, I am going to marry Mr. Lowe Maynard this August. Now, my father is one of the richest men in Sydney and keeps open house, besides which I have traveled and been entertained in half the cities of Europe. I am now twenty-eight. So you can form some idea of the number

of men I have known. I have had money, family, position, good looks, good health, good spirits and numberless opportunities for conquest; and I can conscientiously say that I have always made the most of these. I had never till last winter visited the States, though I have always wanted to, and—I am ashamed to confess this—but, fond as I am of Lowe, I did long to have one last 'good time' before I settled down.

"Now, on account of my advantages, I have had a good many offers, so there was nothing new in the idea of flirting desperately and inducing a few men to propose to me; but I did think there would be something absolutely unique and enjoyable in picking out three men and deliberately proposing to them. If I could go to the States where no one would know me and, just before leaving for Australia, make three formal offers of my hand and heart I felt that life would be worth living. I know you girls will take me for a fool, and perhaps I am one; but the Providence that watches over fools and children was looking out for me, and I met a middle-aged lady from New York, a widow, Mrs. Wood by name, poor, delicate and refined, who had for years been acting as companion to an old cat from Melbourne.

"Now, what could be more opportune? Here was I, dying to visit New York and needing only a chaperon; here was she, dying to do the same thing and needing only the money. She came of a good New York family and had married a poor artist who had left her destitute; so she knew just the two classes of people whom I wished to meet—the conventional well-to-do and the semi-bohemian. She was heaven-sent.

"Well, to make a long story short, she and I traveled all over the United States and Canada, and in February settled in New York for a long stay. We took the nicest apartment we could find, and all Mrs. Wood's friends called upon us and showed us around. I, as the Australian heiress—my engagement, of course, being kept strictly

private—was an object of some interest to the community, and before long I had quite a circle of friends, thanks to Mrs. Wood's kind offices. Among the men who showed me some attention there were three who seemed to me eminently suited for my little experiment. One, Tom Brown, was a good-looking, jolly college boy, years younger than I; the second, Dick Smith, was a typical brainless, harmless lady-killer, with an immense and unwarranted belief in his own attractions; the third, Harry Robinson, was a solid, eminently respectable business man. You know, of course, these are not their real names. All three were comfortably off, so that my money would not be a great consideration; and all three had been decidedly attentive.

"I thought it out carefully and decided that I would propose to Tom on Monday, to Dick on Tuesday and to Harry on Wednesday. We were to sail on Saturday. I wrote and arranged with the men to call on these evenings. I must confess that though the undertaking interested me tremendously, I frequently had qualms and felt like dropping the whole thing. But I did not.

"I decided to propose to all of them in precisely the same way, using as nearly as possible the same words. I wrote my offer down and learned it by heart. What are you laughing at? I am naturally methodical. It ran as follows: 'Mr. Smith (or Brown, or Robinson, as the case might be), why do you think I have asked you to come here tonight?' Then, in reply to his response, whatever it was: 'Because I love you and could not return to Australia without finding out exactly how you felt toward me. Do not think me unwomanly or forward. I felt that I must know. Won't you answer me frankly—as frankly as I have spoken to you?' Girls, please don't laugh! I consider that a very neat proposal for an amateur.

"Well, everything went off like clockwork. Tom walked in on Monday evening—little knowing, poor boy,

what lay before him—and proceeded to discuss the latest play. He talks pretty fast, and I began to fear that I would never get an opening, but at last it came. 'Now or never!' said I, with an inward shudder, and plunged.

"Mr. Brown," I solemnly inquired, 'why do you think I have asked you to come here tonight?'

"I don't know," he said, startled. 'No bad news, I hope? I noticed you didn't seem quite yourself.'

"No, no! no bad news," said I, seized with an insane desire to get it over. 'It was because I love you, and could not return to Australia without finding out exactly how you felt toward me. Do not think me unwomanly or forward. I felt that I must know. Won't you answer me frankly—as frankly as I have spoken to you?'

"I had actually done it. I felt that I had done it badly, that I hadn't delivered myself with proper fervor; but I had done it. What would he say? I watched him intently. Amazement, concern, a sort of fright, not unmixed with pity—all these fought for mastery. Then, to my utter consternation, his face relaxed and he broke into a hearty laugh.

"Why, Miss Jean," he cried, 'I had no idea you were such an actress! Do you know, for a moment I almost thought you were in earnest.'

"I am in earnest," I said; but I said it feebly.

"Oh, yes! you're in earnest! You are always in earnest, aren't you? Ha! ha! You are the most original girl!"

"Suddenly I lost my temper. I was not going to be balked of my beautiful experiment in this fashion. I would be taken seriously.

"Mr. Brown, I am in earnest!" I almost shrieked. 'Why should I joke on such a subject? Mr. Brown, I beg—no, I demand—that you give a serious answer to a serious question.'

"Poor Tom! He sat for a minute in dreadful silence, the horrible, sickening certainty stealing over him. Then he rose, his face illumined by a ghastly grin.

"Ha! ha! Miss Jean, you're awfully good fun, but I've got to meet a fellow at the club. I meant to leave long ago.' (He had been in the room about ten minutes.)

"You have not answered my question yet," said I, feeling like a pig.

"Your question?" said Tom in accents of terror and apprehension. 'Oh, yes—yes, of course; your question. Why—why, Miss Jean, I—I should be very happy, but—but, you see'—a sudden inspiration seized him—the fact is, I'm engaged already. Yes—more firmly—that's it. I'm engaged already.'

"But," said I, in stupefaction, 'don't you remember telling me a week ago that you were not engaged, and that so long as I—?'

"Yes—ah, yes," Tom interrupted, breaking out into a gentle perspiration, 'that is true—very true. But, Miss Jean, you will excuse me, won't you? That fellow is waiting, and—'

"Yes," I replied, trying to look heart-broken, 'you may go. Only promise me, Mr. Brown, that you will never tell anyone what I have said to you tonight.'

"Oh!" cried Tom in horror. 'What an opinion you must have of me, Miss Jean. Never!'

"Good-bye, then, Mr. Brown."

"Good-bye!" said Tom in a hurry, looking as if he wished himself dead. 'That fellow's waiting, you know—pleasant voyage—hope you don't mind—didn't mean any harm—that is—oh, good night—good-bye, I mean, Miss Jean, good-bye.'

"He ran. I collapsed. I laughed till the tears came, and Mrs. Wood, too.

"What is amusing you?" she said. 'Was that young Brown who just left in such a hurry? Oh, Jean, you are a dreadful flirt! You should not lead that poor boy on so.'

"Thus ended my first experiment. My second—that's Dick—was slightly different, as you will see.

"He trotted in on Tuesday, as arranged. Now he, as I said, is a typical society dandy. He is small, slender, beautifully dressed, and 'the latest

thing' is his craze, whether it be in neckties, walking-sticks or girls. I, the wild and woolly Australian heiress, was the latest thing in girls in his set in New York, and accordingly he had paid court to me unceasingly.

"I was getting into the spirit of the thing now, and the man had no sooner divested himself of hat and gloves and taken a chair than I inquired, gently but firmly:

"Mr. Smith, why do you think I have asked you to come here tonight?"

"I do not know," Mr. Smith murmured, 'but I hope'—with a soft glance in my direction—"that it was because you wanted to see me."

"Suddenly my heart sank. Suppose he should accept me! Like Mr. Weller, 'I'm allays afeard of inadwertent captivation, Sammy.' What if he were really in earnest? In that case I should simply have to explain that I was not, and it would be rather an unfortunate situation. But I have a good deal of the bulldog in my composition and, stifling my qualms, I heroically delivered myself of my little formula, word for word.

"Gross darkness of the inner sepulcher was not more deadly still' than little Dick. Minutes elapsed—they seemed hours—during which he sucked his cane and stared at me in silence. Then he removed the cane.

"Poor little girl," he said; 'do you think I didn't see it long ago?"

"I was speechless. 'Poor little girl!' And this from him—that pigmy, whom I towered above! 'Did I think he hadn't seen it long ago?' Seen what? What had I ever said or done to give this tailor's block the idea that I cared anything about him? My rage almost suffocated me. I glared at him in silence, fearing to open my mouth lest unseemly language should proceed therefrom.

"Don't take it so hard!" Dick murmured sympathetically. 'It ought not to be such a blow to you. I am sorry it has come to this. I tried to show you in every possible way that I was quite indifferent, but I did not want to actually hurt your feelings. It is one of

those unfortunate things that cannot be helped.' And the shrimp smirked feelingly at his silly reflection in the glass.

"That was too much. 'Did you—could you—think I was in earnest?' I inquired in tones of suppressed fury.

"In earnest?" repeated Dick, startled. Then a smile of ineffable pity and understanding crept over his countenance.

"Of course you were not in earnest," he said encouragingly. 'Certainly not. I understand. Believe me, Miss Jean, your secret is quite safe with me.'

"I have never been renowned for either discretion or tact—and I have a fluent tongue. For five minutes I talked. At the end of that time Dick rose and grabbed his hat.

"Do you understand me now?" said I, gasping.

"I understand that you have the temper of a virago and the tongue of a fiend," retorted Dick, scarlet with rage. 'It is fortunate'—preening his feathers and strutting pompously to the door—"that I am a gentleman and a man of honor; otherwise New York would be ringing with the tale of your unrequited attachment. Many women have loved me, but not one—with a fiendish glare in my direction—not one has ever so much as thought of proposing to me before.'

"With which Parthian shot he vanished into the night. Do you want to hear about Harry, now?"

"You don't mean to say that you tried again?" we cried, aghast.

"I started with the intention of proposing to Tom, Dick and Harry on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday," Australia returned stubbornly, "and you ought to know me well enough by this time to realize that on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday Tom, Dick and Harry were proposed to.

"Harry was about thirty-five, tall, broad, substantial and well dressed—just a prosperous New York man of affairs. You must have seen hundreds exactly like him. He had not much conversation, and appeared to trot me around more because it was the correct

thing for a man to pay attention to some girl than because he especially enjoyed doing it. I talked to him awhile on various subjects, then sighed faintly, looked fixedly at him and propounded my conundrum: 'Why do you think I have asked you to come here tonight?'

"Harry looked amazed, then pleased. 'I have no idea, Miss Cavendish. Is there anything I can do for you—anything you would like to see before leaving New York? I shall be most happy, you know—'

"No," said I firmly, feeling quite self-possessed and natural—how soon one does get accustomed to things!—'no, Mr. Robinson, it was because I love you and could not return to Australia without finding out exactly how you felt toward me. Do not think me unwomanly or forward. I felt that I must know. Won't you answer me frankly?—as frankly as I have spoken to you?'

"Now what do you suppose that man did? He turned purple with indignation, cleared his throat three times, then pompously delivered himself about like this:

"Miss Cavendish, I refuse, I refuse absolutely to listen to your preposterous proposals. Anything so unconventional, so strange, so—so—so—I have seldom heard. My wife, when I have one, must be a lady of irreproachable breeding, the sort of woman who would never, until I proposed to her, give me the faintest idea that she intended to accept me. Until tonight I had—I had—thought of you as that lady. Your demeanor has been most correct, and I appreciated it so highly that I had—I *had*—very impressively—'fully intended to ask you to be my wife.'

"What extraordinary beings men are! I had treated Tom, Dick and Harry in exactly the same way, and yet consider the different conclusions they had drawn from my conduct!

"Well, when Harry had concluded his little song and dance, and paused that the iron might enter into my soul as I gradually realized what I had lost, I felt—not squelched and abashed, as

a well-regulated lady should have done under the circumstances, but thoughtful. Finally I decided that I might as well end the interview.

"If you won't have me, Mr. Robinson," said I airily, 'why, you won't, that's all. So let it rest there. I need not ask that you do not entertain the next man you take a drink with, with an account of my strange, unconventional proceedings.'

"You need not, indeed," returned Harry, evidently pained by my flippancy. 'If you have forgotten what is due to you as a lady, I'—grandly—'have not forgotten what is due to me as a gentleman.'

"Insufferable prig!

"I fear you have," said I coldly. 'Don't speak to me in that strain again, please. All thinking people agree that a woman has as much right to propose to a man as he has to propose to her. Only a stupid, narrow-minded and rather ignorant person could have spoken as you did just now. We will say good night, or, rather, good-bye, as I sail on Saturday, and I am not likely to see you again.'

"I fear not," said Harry in his most gentlemanly accents; and I longed to hurl every china shepherdess and matchbox on the mantelpiece at his irreproachable head. 'Good-bye, Miss Cavendish.'

"Good-bye," said I; and out went my third venture."

"Oh, dear!" said Texas disconsolately. "It's the most thrilling thing I ever listened to, and it's all over."

"Indeed it is not," returned Australia. "There is more to come—not much more, but it will interest you as throwing a fresh light on the subject. On Friday afternoon I received a visit from the Reverend Howlitt Parr. He was interested in raising a fund for sending children to the country, and I had contributed pretty liberally and otherwise helped him along. So he felt friendly toward me and, being a kind old man, had called to tell me—what do you suppose?—that at a stag-party the night before Mr. Thomas Brown had

become slightly exhilarated and had informed the assembled company that I had requested his hand in marriage; whereupon Mr. Richard Smith and Mr. Henry Robinson had indignantly contradicted him, each averring that it was he and he only who had received the offer of my hand and heart. The three had nearly come to blows, but had finally quieted down and agreed that each of them must have been favored with an exactly similar proposal, couched in exactly similar terms. Oh, girls! How sweet I did feel and how I blessed 'whatever gods there be' that this was Friday and that we were leaving New York on Saturday! But I determined to go with the honors of war on my side. My brain worked quickly. There was to be a large entertainment for the Fresh Air Fund that night. I had promised to contribute a monologue. I saw my way clear.

"Mr. Parr," said I, 'I can't explain things now. I thank you very much for your information. I shall be at your concert tonight; I shall deliver my monologue, and I promise you a full and satisfactory explanation of this story. Please tell everyone you know that I am going; it will swell the audience. *Au revoir* till tonight; and thank you again very much.'

"I went to my room. I locked myself in. I wrote and wrote and wrote. When evening came I arrayed myself in the most gorgeous gown in my possession, and, chaperoned by Mrs. Wood, departed for the scene of action.

"When I walked on the stage in my eight-hundred-dollar Paris gown I—yes, I certainly *did* create a sensation. There was a loud rustling and whispering from one end of the hall to the other. Well could I guess the purport of the remarks that seethed and hissed about me. You think I flinched then? Not a flinch. I stood like my own British lion personified, bowed smilingly, and took a comprehensive glance at the audience. Oh, joy! In the distance I could discern the well-loved faces of Tom, Dick and Harry. Nothing more was needed to complete my satisfaction.

"'Ladies and Gentlemen,' I said clearly and smilingly, 'I have been asked to contribute an original monologue to this evening's entertainment. I take great pleasure in so doing; and before beginning, I wish to say that my monologue was written only this afternoon. The title is'—I paused for the fraction of a second and an expression of unearthly and seraphic innocence crept slowly over my speaking countenance—'the title is, "How I Proposed and was Rejected".'

"Dear girls, I leave you to imagine the unholy joy with which my heart swelled as I saw the effect these simple words produced. The expression on Messrs. Tom, Dick and Harry's faces left nothing to be desired.

"You can guess what the monologue was like. It was a literal transcription of all that those three men had said. Over and over again the roars and violent applause of the audience compelled me to stop. When I finally bowed and walked off, the whole place was in an uproar. Victory, complete and glorious victory, was mine.

"Well, there is not much more to tell. My monologue closed the concert part of the affair, and buying and selling were immediately entered into with renewed vigor.

"I am inclined to think that a person of really retiring nature would have shrunk from descending into the brilliantly illuminated hall and mingling with the giddy throng which vainly endeavored to eat ice cream, express its horror and amazement at my escapades and keep the strenuous salesladies at bay at one and the same time. But I have never been afflicted with that morbid shyness which renders life a burden to some people, and I gladly availed myself of the Reverend Howlitt Parr's arm and escort to a seat not far removed from the vicinity of Tom, Dick and Harry. Dear boys! I heartily forgave them all their misdeeds when Mr. Parr, pressing an ice upon me, burst forth:

"'Oh, Miss Cavendish, you were the hit of the evening. But how *could* you be so naughty?'

"'Why, Mr. Parr,' I replied with solemnity, 'I simply couldn't help it. It was such an opportunity to plumb the depths of masculine conceit and stupidity and at the same time turn an honest penny for the benefit of the poor little children. For you know,' I added, raising my voice ever so slightly and gazing guilelessly into space, 'for you know I really think the *Globe* or the *Diurnal* will be willing to pay me liberally for the privilege of publishing this simple little sketch.'

"Poor Tom, Dick and Harry! Even my hard heart began to melt at the sight of their misery, and I added sweetly:

"Perhaps if I receive some whacking good cheques from benevolently inclined private individuals I may not trouble to dispose of the monologue, though I do think it's good. So true to life! Then, too, while I like to help the poor, I fear that my fiancé may object to this particular mode of——"

"Your fiancé, Miss Cavendish?" put

in Mr. Parr, beaming nervously upon me. The dear man liked me, but I know that he thinks I am about as safe and harmless as an unchained tiger, decorated with bombs. 'Your fiancé? Do you mean to say——?'

"'Why, yes, I'm going to be married in August,' said I pleasantly; and I felt rather than heard the stir among my listeners."

"Is that all?" said I, gasping.

"That's all."

"It's enough," Texas thought.

"One thing more, Australia," said Boston, her eyes positively glittering with psychological inquiry, "one thing more. Now you have done it, are you glad or sorry?"

"Glad to have had the experience and sorry to have done it," said Australia, after a moment's thought. "From a logical point of view it seems all right, but from a feminine point of view it seems all wrong. And what have I to do with logic? I—a woman!"



A SPRINGTIME LOVE

OH, morning skies were fair and blue in spring's sweet singing season,
And happiness we idly sought with all youth's fond unreason;
In gardens gay our joy we met, and found in flowerful closes
The love that came with the daffodils—and went away with the roses.

For soon the joyous springtime passed and left our dream Elysian
Only a fancy unfulfilled, only a fleeting vision;
And dead beneath the immortelles of Memory reposes
The love that came with the daffodils—and went away with the roses.

CAROLYN WELLS.



AT THE ASYLUM FOR INEBRIATES

"DO you treat drunkards here?"

"Yes sir."

"Well, I'm one. Where's your bar?"

STALLED

MAUDE, I love you as I might
 Love a hundred-horse Mercedes,
 But I'm such a bashful wight
 In the company of ladies
 That when for your hand I'd plead—
 At the most important juncture—
 With my hopes at triple speed—
 Whoof! my courage gets a puncture!

If my soul almost uncorks,
 And my vows are all but spoken,
 Then the conversation forks,
 And my steering-gear is broken.
 When I've nerved myself to make
 The sublime, supreme endeavor,
 I can never set the brake,
 And the talk scoots on forever.

With a brimming tank of pluck—
 Gaining power every minute—
 Suddenly I find I'm stuck!
 Tank has leaked—there's nothing in it!
 Or, when I would surely pop,
 Mater comes, and tea's suggested;
 Nails me like a blooming cop—
 Takes my number—I'm arrested!

Talk's the mud in which I'm stalled,
 Like a bashful summer boarder;
 And so often have I called
 With my sparker out of order
 That in rhyme I now aver
 The suspense that I'm enduring;
 Only make me your chauffeur
 And for life I'll take you touring.

FRANK ROE BATCHELDER.



HIS BEHAVIOR

"HE—
 "Oh, pshaw! he acts as if he had obtained his table manners from a
 correspondence school for training walruses."

THE EMPTY SADDLE

By W. C. Morrow

THE wild hammering of hoofs behind me did not immediately seize my notice. I was a stranger in that part of England, and all the witcheries of a hazy midnight moon drenched the highway unrolling before me. The long strides that I was making on this vagabond outing were the foot-strokes of a swimmer in a sea of melted loveliness. A few miles ahead lay the village of Arlington, and I had learned that the good Widow Carter kept there the sweetest inn known to that region. Should a constable take me up on the way for a suspicious character, the sealed papers in my pocket would aggravate my embarrassment. All of these kept the hoof-beats waiting outside my attention.

A horse talks with his hoofs, and I knew the language well. Had the enchantments through which I walked been less engaging, I should have heard sooner the frantic terror that rang loud from the boom rolling through the stillness. Presently I did heed it, and it was one of those sounds to which a man cannot keep his back on a highway, for they more than likely mean peril to some human life. I turned. A splendid animal bore down upon me, his snorting nose high; the flying stirrups of a vacant saddle were beating his flanks.

Something besides the vanity of a man who knows horses determined me to lay my measure here. I stepped in front as he charged up. His sure feet did not slip an inch under his great bulk as he swerved, rearing, and on the moment my leap brought one hand with a slapping grip on his nostrils, and the other on his mane. He struggled

at first, as a spirited horse will in trying out a man. Then his noble terror degenerated into a universal tremor, the note of surrender.

My soothing voice did its offices, the smothering clutch relaxed and the hand-smoothing of his muzzle brought him to a semblance of proud, unbroken resignation. He looked a gentleman to whose throat a footpad held a pistol.

A clear duty was to mount him and ride back to the beginning of the drama, which might be anything from a drunken man to a stark face gazing from the road. Some observations came; so splendid a beast and so elegant accoutrements meant aristocratic ownership. I took the rein in my left hand, my glance found the stirrup-straps fitted to such a six-footer as I, and my right hand slipped over the saddle. Something wet and sticky interrupted the movement, but the moon was too dim to show more than a dark stain on my hand. With eager haste I leaped into the saddle.

My adversary knew that he wore the bit of a loving and merciful master, and hence that my mounting relinquished my control. I could feel his great heart thumping his ribs and his breathing held under a mighty control. But the arrogance that lifted me to the saddle had its inevitable blind side. I tried to swing the beast back, but he had reasons of his own for a contrary course. He knew that I had neither quirt nor spur, and that his bit was a gentleman's. With every trick he sought to unseat me, rearing nearly to toppling, lunging, swerving, plunging, wheeling. At the end he realized that I knew how to sit a horse, even when

powerless to direct him. Then, with long reaches and incredible speed he dashed toward the village.

That was well enough, for he would find his home, and the rescue-search would be only delayed. Of a sudden he left the highroad to the village and swung into an avenue lying in deep gloom under trees. This gave me no concern until I realized that by leaving the middle of this private road he was aiming to drag me off by means of the low branches on the side. To match his wit I was flinging myself flat on his neck, when a limb caught me a blinding smash in the face. But my heels were well dug in, and the blaze that crashed over me found me sick and reeling, but secure. As quickly as my stifling numbness and the tearing branches would permit, I flung forward and hooked my hands in his throat. I could hang on thus till the trumpets overthrew the walls of Jericho—and the beast knew it. He knew, too, the purpose of competent hands groping for his windpipe; and he cleared the trees, dashed into the avenue, and set a race against defeat by strangulation.

The wet and aching numbness of my face made me feel that every feature had been torn away by the trees, and the sickness stealing over me grew thicker, and weakened my hands. An upward glance showed a great house blackly closing the vista. Near it the horse swung aside, and soon plunged into the darkness of a stable. With a loud whinny he entered his stall.

The shadows from a dim lantern immediately began to dance, and the voice of a groom sounded dull in my ears:

"Are you hurt, sir?"

There is no odder experience than finding that one's tongue has lost its function. No more successful was my effort to straighten up in the saddle.

The man set down the lantern and slipped a timidly respectful hand up my thigh to my body. A rustle swished down the row of stalls, and a woman stood beside him, peering up at me fearfully.

"You are hurt, dear?" she said, with difficulty. Judging by her expression, which swam dizzily on the face below, my own must have been horrifying. But a matchless courage held her imperious spirit.

"Quick!" she said under her breath to the groom. "Pull him down; we'll ease him."

My sprawling hands swept the wet and quivering horse as I was gently dragged from the saddle. The man on one side, and the woman on the other, kept me from floundering in the straw, for they held me up and worked me out of the stall.

"Dear, dear!" she cried under her breath, "don't you know me? It is I. Can't you see? I have you again, dear heart! God be praised! Come, lean on me. We will take you to the house." She had seized my hand and was passionately kissing it.

By no effort could I keep my legs.

"Take him on your back!" she commanded the groom.

The man had a task in that, but I knew that his back would break before his obedience. With swaying steps he lurched under me across a wide, tree-grown lawn, following the woman, who led him to a small porch in the rear, unlocked a door and preceded him into the total darkness within. He laboriously began the ascent of a carpeted stair. Smothered flutterings and whispers stirred the blackness.

"I must have a light," he panted. Fear had inspired his demand.

"Sh!" came the woman's warning. "I'll lead you," she whispered. "Don't speak."

In groping for a hold on him her velvet hand found mine, gave it a quick caress, and seized the groom's sleeve. He walked with more sureness then. A turn in an upper corridor brought us to a door, which the woman opened on a faint light.

"Lay him here—gently," she said, closing the door.

She turned up a shaded lamp on the centre-table as the man slipped me to a couch and straightened out my legs, which felt like wooden appendages.

"Go for the doctor as fast as you can," she said, "and tell those maids to go back to bed instantly. Say that your master is here, and is well. Not another word. Wake Donald and tell him to come. Hurry!"

The man went out and the woman flung herself on her knees beside me, put her arms about me, and buried her face in my breast. Through my blurred vision I saw that she was young and beautiful, with the mark of high breeding. Her breast was heaving as she struggled with what I supposed was merely a natural horror to look into my disfigured face.

"Darling," she moaned, "can't you speak to me?"

I made no response. Her fingers ran down my arm and eagerly seized my hand.

"Press my fingers, dear, if you understand."

I am not certain that I had the power to comply, but I do know that some instinct prohibited the effort. She raised her head and gazed with much more than terror into my bruised eyes, which steadily regarded her. She must have seen some intelligent comprehension; but what it, coupled with my unresponsiveness, meant to her, I could not guess further than that the safety of her soul rested on my conduct. Her agony was shaping a new form of pleading, when a light tap at the door was followed by the entrance of a pale, aristocratic young man, in a tumble of incomplete dress. He observed me in astonishment.

"Donald!" she cried under her breath, anticipating his question and springing to her feet. "Come, Frank is hurt. He can't speak. I've sent for the doctor. Come and see—I'm afraid he is dying."

The newcomer was not more than nineteen; he was sensitive and lacked the woman's sureness and courage. After a struggle to conquer his repugnance at the aspect that I presented, he took my hand and laid his ear to my breast. The woman stood waiting in agony. He peered into my face.

"Frank!" he preemptorily said.

It was hard to deny him, but I withheld.

"How is he?" she asked.

"Strong, I think, but badly shaken."

"Try him with a drink of water."

She briefly explained that Prince had brought me home in this condition, and that he had probably run away and taken me through the trees of the avenue.

Deeply puzzled and doubtfully shaking his head, Donald retired. The woman again sank beside me.

"Dearest," she pleaded, "please, please, for my sake, don't tell him the truth! You are safe with me—the blessed God in heaven be praised for that!—and, dear, the awful past is forever gone and forgotten. Dear, dear, can't you bring your generous heart to give me a sign to—?"

Donald opened the door. By all indications he was the woman's brother. He leaned over me, slipped his hand under my head, raised me and brought the water to my lips. It was refreshing.

At the opposite side of the room was a richly carved bed. The woman turned back the covers.

Donald's shaken nerve had grown composed. With great gentleness he and his sister removed my outer clothing, enveloped me in a luxurious dressing-gown, supported my lurching progress to the bed, and made me comfortable therein.

They had a whispered discussion as to whether my face ought to be washed before the doctor came, but Donald opposed his sister's suggestion. They seated themselves at the bedside, and she affectionately held my hand, gently stroking it.

All this time I had been fighting an insidious somnolence. Opposing it was a conscience demanding that I disclose myself; but irresponsibility is beguiling, and a man broken in body is transformed by sympathy into a selfish and helpless animal. Indeed, I cannot say with certainty that my paralysis was fictitious. It is pleasant to salve conscience with doubt. And there must be a reason for the fog over my memory of those hours.

The light was again turned low. The velvet hand filled me with a wonderful content. . . . Very soon I should be able to talk, and then—

A brisk, strong man, who smelled of antiseptics and tobacco, roused me with a swift overhauling, and then came warm water on my face, with cloths deftly handled. The sharp prick of a hypodermic needle somewhere startled me into a transient alertness. I felt as though running a hard race to outdistance something that sought to trip and strangle me. Adhesive things, stinging like leeches, were stretched on my face. At the end my head swung up, glass rattled on my teeth and a kindly, gruff voice commanded:

"Drink."

The draught slipped down and wrangled with internal fires. My eyes, feeling full of sand, dragged open and discovered a firm, bearded face intently studying me. I tried to speak, for I felt able to, but found that my face was heavily padded under wet cloths of an evil odor. My lips were closed.

A glance past the doctor found the lovely woman standing beside a small table covered with a basin and towels. Her brother sat anxiously on the couch.

"He is coming round beautifully," said the doctor.

"Is he conscious?" she breathlessly asked.

"Partly; but he must not speak."

He sent a deep glance at the woman, and, despite her fine self-control, she shrank under it as if it were an accusation. Some intuition appeared to seize the man. He turned to Donald. "Go to bed, lad," he kindly said. "All is well here. Your sister and I will stay."

"Do you insist that I go?" The young man had promptly risen, and he asked the question somewhat stiffly.

"Yes," was the hearty, disarming answer. "There's nothing for you to do. You'll be needed later. Go to bed."

He started away, but a backward glance at his sister found her turned wistfully toward him. He wavered a moment in embarrassment, and then

went and put his arm about her, kissed her forehead and gently said:

"Remember, I am your brother."

Tears flooded her eyes when she withdrew them from his disappearing figure.

"Come and sit beside him," said the doctor to her. "I will visit with Donald. You'll find me in his room if I am needed."

We were alone together. She seated herself and hovered over me. My wits had cleared sufficiently for me to realize the gravity of the situation. It was deplorable enough that I had been so naturally mistaken for another. Far worse were dangers which likely arose out of that situation. The terrified horse and the stain on the saddle meant the urgent need of a return to my initial purpose, when I had encountered the frantic animal. I had been enjoined not to talk, but that was nothing. I had a free hand to tear away the cloths, yet—

"Dear," the woman said, her voice overflowing with love and something besides, "if you understand, press my hand."

I complied, and her face glowed for only a moment, and the shadow returned.

"You dropped his note," she went on, her face paling and flushing by turns. "I was anxious and suspicious, and read it." There came no movement from me, and she timidly regarded me. "It said that you knew where to meet him and that you would recognize him by the white sash around his waist, and that— Oh, dear heart, it was only just before you returned that I saw through his cowardly plot, and then I didn't know how to find you! But God has been merciful and has brought you back to me. I knew at last that he had lured you away to—to end your life. And you knew it, you knew it! You went forth in the pride and glory of your manhood to slay or be slain—for the sake of the woman you loved."

She broke down and sobbed, her face buried in the edge of the bed. After that she raised her anguished eyes and resumed.

"His aim was to make a widow of me—as you knew! . . . He charmed me with his voice, with his eyes, with his subtle flatteries. He made me believe that the life in this lonely place was too dull for me. I listened. I am young and have seen little. He waked the yearning that slumbers in every woman's heart—a blind, unreasoning impulse that time or some great sorrow must drive out as an evil spirit. Dear husband, it was my longing for some emotional experience—the old menace to all that makes a woman desirable and good. Do you understand?"

I pressed her hand, but I could not interrupt her in this sacred moment, though likely the husband to whom her awakened soul had returned was lying cold under the moon. My response thrilled her miraculously. The ensuing pause was heavy with suspense.

"Don't misunderstand me, love," she resumed, with a choking effort. "It was I that made this night possible. I want to know the truth. That is my right, since I am here to suffer and atone. Your hand-pressure will be my answer. You had an encounter with him. You were hurt, but are safe. Is—is he alive?"

My hand lay inert in her trembling grasp. She drew away, her eager hope fading into the blanching of her face.

It was more than a man of my blood could bear. She saw the flame in my eyes and felt the inner strain that tightened my helpless body. That routed her, and she pinioned my arms.

"Be still!" she said. "Whatever has happened, God is just. I must accept what I have earned, and—"

She straightened and listened. Her hearing, acuter than mine, first detected the sounds of a disturbance in the house. Her sweet face was turned in profile. I heard the sounds approaching. There were scuffings and muffled voices; a man was trying vainly to explain. He must have been determined, for a heavy body was dashed against a wall and an impatient hand tried the locked door of the room.

My nurse sprang to her feet, and stood a moment in fearful hesitancy.

"Then he is alive and is hunting you!" she exclaimed.

She ran to a chiffonier, drew from a drawer something that she concealed from me, and with a breathless, "Be quiet, dear; he sha'n't hurt you," ran to the door and stood rigidly confronting it, her back to me and her body concealing what she held in her hand.

The lunge of a heavy man burst open the door. His momentum threw him forward, but, without turning, he closed the door. As he was doing so there came the crash of a pistol-shot, and he staggered back against the wall.

I had seen the spurt of flame from the woman's hand. The man, evidently hard hit, was glaring at her as he swayed. After a moment of horrified stillness the woman flung her arms aloft, and the pistol dropped noisily to the floor.

"Frank—my husband!" she said, and then turned a swift and awful look upon me before again facing the specter against the wall.

He was fighting the shock of his wound, the location of which was disclosed by the unconscious raising of a hand to his right shoulder. His whole appearance was greatly disordered, and from the dark stain on a slash that had opened his trousers at the hip I knew that he had passed through a critical moment to which the stain on the saddle must have borne a relation.

His dazed glance followed his wife's to me. An entire self-command instantly braced him, and, his hurts forgotten, he stared at me with a malevolence that I hope never to see again in a human face. His burning eyes turned on his wife.

"So," he sneered, his voice even and calm, "after luring me out and trying to assassinate me he left me for dead, hastened to you and was considerably placed in my bed!"

"No!" she cried, starting toward him; but his outthrust hand stopped her.

"I can see that he comprehends and that his prostration is a sham," he

went on, with a contemptuous glance at me. "He will therefore enjoy with you my account of his infamy. I recognized his white sash, but before I could dismount the coward's dagger was at work. It missed my abdomen." He glanced at the wounded hip. "As I was dismounting he dragged me backward and I fell heavily on the back of my head. I was partly stunned, but had the presence of mind to lie like a man dying of a dislocated neck as the coward watched over me with his weapon ready. When he thought I was dead he mounted Prince, and I became unconscious."

The woman stood crushed and impotent. Her husband snatched up the pistol and strode toward me, but she sprang out of her trance and threw herself upon him.

"I—I thought it was *you*, my husband. He"—glancing round at me—"was dazed and couldn't speak. His face was so marred that I mistook him for you—and he rode here in that condition on your horse." She was gripping him with a strength that stayed him.

She was also clinging to the pistol; and when he flung her to the floor she dragged the weapon out of his hand and covered it on the floor with her body.

The man's approach to my bed found me unable to move. He snatched the cloths from my face, but surprise arrested him and he started back. As he wavered in uncertainty, the physician and Donald hurriedly entered and looked their consternation. The woman was weakly rising, but the men were too overcome by the specter of the man at my bedside to assist her. High breeding shows first on the tongue; these four persons could set a guard over their speech even when plunged thus into the heart of a dramatic mystery. The two men approached in silence and looked from the husband to me, and back again. A doctor's training is useful in an emergency.

"Come," said the physician to the husband, taking his arm. "You need attention. Donald, bring your sister."

The fury of the wounded man had melted into perplexity. He meekly submitted.

"Remain quiet," said the doctor to me. "I will return as soon as I have attended to him."

It was all that was left me to do, for the scene had shattered my rallying strength. Even had I been capable of movement, remaining still was obviously my only course. The time dragged in an uneasy half-sleep till the doctor came back. His manner was prompt and professional, but I roused sufficiently to see that some deep emotion lay under his calm. He sat at the bedside, studied my face and felt my pulse.

"You need something quieting," he remarked; then, abruptly, "are you a stranger here?"

"Yes."

"Where did you find the horse?"

I explained, and gave a brief account of my hurts.

He nodded in profound and curious interest, and, producing a vial, remarked:

"You were fortunate. That beast is capable of killing a stranger. It is best not to stop a riderless horse in the road. Take this," offering the vial at my lips. "It will make you sleep."

On the instant of swallowing it an awful fear assailed me. Unwittingly I had stumbled into a tragedy. These people were proud. I was a stranger and had blundered into tremendous secrets affecting them. But the doctor had been closely watching me and was ready for the leap that I struggled to make; for he threw himself upon me and shut off any outcry by closing my throat in his clutch. . . . The room swam red, and then burst into a blinding, suffocating flame.

The entrance of a rotund woman, beaming with kindness and bearing a tray, roused me. It was daylight, but the room—typical of a perfectly kept village inn—was darkened. My bed was comfortable, and my clothes were neatly folded on a chair.

"Mrs. Carter?" I inquired.

"Yes, sir. Are you feeling pretty well, sir?"

"Pretty well," I answered.

"That's good. Here's some cold water and chicken broth, sir."

There was magic in the hands that helped me prop myself in bed, and the refectation was delicious, in spite of some hampering soreness.

"What time is it?" I asked.

"About four in the afternoon, sir."

"What time did I come here?"

She kept her face from me in some bustling work about the room.

"You were found on the porch at daylight, sir. Excuse me, sir; I'm called below."

She returned immediately bearing a note sealed with a crest, but not directed. On opening it I found it addressed to me by name and signed with the full name of a woman. It ran:

I write the following at my husband's request and dictation:

Having learned only this afternoon that you had been removed to the inn—the well-meant act of a devoted friend—I hasten to express my profound regret that it was done, and an earnest hope for your early recovery. And permit me, dear sir, to express both my sorrow at the discomfort which you have suffered, and my gratitude that through it has come the restoration of my happiness. It makes me glad to know that what you have learned will forever remain sacred with you, but it will complete the happiness of my dear wife and myself if you will regard our home as your own whenever you may care so to use it, and us among the warmest of your friends.

I have to inform you that the body of an unfortunate man wearing a white sash around his waist was found this morning. He had been thrown and trampled by a horse. Believe me, dear sir, with assurances of—etc.

Mrs. Carter was respectfully awaiting my orders. At my request she handed me my coat, and I discovered that the sealed envelope containing papers relating to my American consulship had been opened.



DEFINED

THE HEATHEN (*a resident of the sea-girl isle*)—I don't quite understand—what is civilization?

THE CASTAWAY (*from the U. S. A.*)—Civilization, my benighted friend, is merely another name for working for a living.



DISARMING SUSPICION

"HOW'S this?" said Cumso to Cawker as they sat down to the annual banquet of the Allied Sons of Liberty. "There's no wine on the menu, but half a dozen glasses are at each place."

"The menu is to take home to our wives," was the satisfactory explanation.



CURIOSITY often hides behind the mask of solicitude.

LE VOL SUPRÊME DE L'OISEAU

DANS la grande forêt au verdoyant mystère,
 On ne trouve jamais, sur la mousse ou la terre,
 Le cadavre des oiseaux morts.
 Cependant, l'oiseau meurt! Quand son libre poème
 Va finir, a-t-il donc une pudeur suprême?
 Va-t-il au loin cacher son corps?

Ses frères lui font-ils de belles funérailles,
 Et, parmi les buissons en fleurs, dans les broussailles,
 Sous le bois, ce temple éclatant,
 Rouges-gorges, pinsons, rossignols et mésanges,
 Menant un long convoi plein de rites étranges,
 L'accompagnent-ils en chantant?

Mais non! Quand l'oiseau doit mourir, il le devine,
 La clarté de l'instinct étant toute divine.

Alors, pinson ou rossignol,
 Aux prés fleuris, au bois adorable, il adresse
 Un dernier chant joyeux, testament de tendresse;
 Il se recueille et prend son vol.

Il prend son vol tout droit vers le ciel. Il s'élève
 Plus haut que la montagne, et plus haut que le rêve
 Et que le nuage vermeil!
 Puis, dans l'enivrement de sa fuite sublime,
 Plongeant à corps perdu dans le feu de l'abîme,
 Il se fait brûler au soleil!

EMILE HINZLEIN.



OBSERVATIONS

IT is hard to say which is the more difficult—living down a past or living up to a future.

Experience—the name we give our failures.

Impulse—what we regret next day.

BEATRICE STURGES.



JONNEY—You wouldn't take me to be a member of one of the richest families in the city, would you?

CROSBY—No, I don't think I would.

"Neither would Miss Golden. I asked her to last night."

ON THE NEWPORT ROAD

By Sewell Ford

THEY were breakfasting at Cresthills.

Cresthills and breakfast! Down in Valeburg those two words were always linked with another—champagne. It was an absurd slander, to be sure. But then, the Valeburg folk did not like the folk up at Cresthills. They resented the coldly impersonal manner in which Mrs. "Billy" Redkirk glanced at them as she rode to and from the railroad station. They had heard, too, that she spoke of them as "those vulgar villagers." So the fiction that everyone at Cresthills drank champagne at breakfast was gleefully circulated.

They were doing nothing of the sort, of course. Mr. William Redkirk, with morning paper opened to the sporting page and propped against the toast-rack, was dividing his attention between that and his coffee-cup. Mrs. "Billy" was opening letters with a fruit-knife. Aunt Emily was drinking cocoa. She knew it made her stouter, but she liked it. Barbara was sipping hot milk because—well, it is not best to try to account for Barbara. Mrs. "Billy" couldn't and Mrs. "Billy" was her mother.

At any rate, there was no champagne. Yet they would not have believed this down at Valeburg. The folk there knew that anyone who could squander money as Mrs. "Billy" squandered it, *must* drink champagne, not only at breakfast, but at luncheon and dinner and most likely in the middle of the night. Look at what she had done with Cresthills!

It was quite true. Mrs. "Billy" had done things to Cresthills, or caused

them to be done. She began doing them soon after old Jeremiah Redkirk, with a cynical smile on his rugged face, released his grip on the millions he had piled up and passed on to make his last accounting.

That had been four years ago. Since then Mrs. "Billy" had turned an old-fashioned, box-built country mansion, with a cupola and much fancy jig-saw work under the eaves, into an imposing structure which had a Colonial front, a porte-cochère and huge Dutch chimneys. She had transformed twenty acres of worn-out Connecticut farm-land into a veritable park, surrounded her domain with a bristly topped iron fence of Florentine design, and christened the result Cresthills. Then she had turned her eyes toward Newport and begun her campaign.

"Why not?" she had demanded of Aunt Emily. "It isn't as if we had just made our money, nor as if we got it from patent medicines, nor bottled beer, nor a breakfast food. And we don't come from Chicago. So why not?"

Her sister-in-law did not trouble herself to reply. She merely gazed at Mrs. "Billy" and retained her sleek, bovine complacency.

Mr. William Redkirk was not consulted. He never was. In family affairs he did not even play a thinking part. Mrs. "Billy" did that for him, too, and he was content. Vaguely he was conscious of being towed in the wake of Mrs. "Billy" from the placid waters of comfortable obscurity into the more troubled channels of an uneasy life; a life where it mattered

not only what you did and where you went, but how you did it, who went with you and who saw you there.

It was all very complex, but Billy submitted unprotestingly so long as he could occasionally escape to enjoy the company of men who could talk intelligently about the light-weight championship and how the horses were running. Besides, Mrs. "Billy" made matters comparatively easy by deciding that the role of country gentleman was best for him. With only a few hints he dressed the part to perfection.

Chiefly on this account Mrs. "Billy" conducted her campaign from Cresthills, keeping the new city house closed except for two or three winter months, when it was absolutely necessary to be seen in town. Cresthills, too, was chosen as the arena for her master-stroke.

It was to be a house-party, an English house-party, as English as she could make it, considering the limitations of her own experience and the un-English environment of Cresthills. But it must be English, for was not Mr. Lawrence Cheltingham to be one of the guests?

The discovery, capture and contribution of Mr. Cheltingham to Mrs. "Billy's" visiting list had been the one notable achievement in her husband's not altogether brilliant social career.

"Cheltingham! Why, that sounds good," she had mused at first mention of the name. "It sounds English."

"Ye-e-es, he is English," admitted Billy a little reluctantly.

Five minutes later Mrs. "Billy" had appeared from the library with the "Peerage" under her arm.

"There's a Cheltingham who's an earl?" she said, looking doubtfully at her husband.

"Oh, yes; that's his uncle. But Larry's a bang-up polo player, for all that. He's one of the Hurlingham champions, you know. Came over here to try for the——"

"And his uncle is an earl! Billy"—there was almost admiration in her

glance—"how did you ever manage it?"

"Manage! There wasn't any managing about it. He was in our crowd at the Suburban Handicap. Mighty nice chap, too."

Mrs. "Billy" also elicited the information that Mr. Cheltingham was young, unmarried, "well put up," and that he was to spend the summer on this side of the ocean.

"Then you must bring him out," declared Mrs. "Billy." "Do you suppose you can?"

"Why can't I? We have a billiard tie to play off. I'll just wire him to run up tomorrow."

It was after Mrs. "Billy" had seen him, heard her husband confidently call him "Larry," had diplomatically dragged from her guest an admission that his uncle was, in very truth, an earl, that she began to plan her house-party and to long for Barbara's return.

"Mr. Lawrence Cheltingham, nephew of an earl." In secret Mrs. "Billy" whispered these words to herself, as if rehearsing them. At such moments Newport did not seem at all remote to the soaring soul of Mrs. "Billy." She saw its gates—the massive, iron-studded, cruelly spiked gates, which Newport does not possess, of course, but which it really should, you know—saw them swing grudgingly open on creaking hinges, saw Mr. Lawrence Cheltingham stalk boldly in with Barbara on his arm, saw herself close behind with Billy in tow, urging him to slip in quickly before the gates clanged shut.

All of this airy vision depended upon two persons, Barbara and Lawrence Cheltingham, who—and now see how daring an architect of fate Mrs. "Billy" could be—who had never met. But they should meet. Barbara's intricate education was at last near an end. She was coming home to abide with them at Cresthills. The house-party should mark her entrance into that world wherein Mrs. "Billy" had so long hoped to see her take her place.

It was not to be a big affair. No more than a dozen had been bidden,

but they would make up a very select dozen, from the standpoint of Mrs. "Billy." They would be personages who could help, personages who might not care, under ordinary circumstances, to spend a week at Cresthills, but who could not resist an opportunity to meet "the nephew of an earl." Oh, Mrs. "Billy" knew what would bring them! She had baited hooks before.

To a London society magazine she was indebted for her program, basing it on a description of a house-party given by a Lady Somebody in Something - or - Othershire. True, there could be no cricket match—Mr. Cheltingham could not be expected to cricket all by himself—nor polo. But there should be archery, and lawn bowls and a gymkhana tournament. Lady Somebody's guests had indulged in all these things.

"Why not croquet and tiddledewinks and authors, or aren't they stupid enough?" Billy Redkirk had ventured in mild scorn.

But Mrs. "Billy" paid no heed. She just looked at him disapprovingly, and sighed. Billy would be more or less of a handicap. But then, there would be Barbara. There were many husbands such as Billy, or worse, but how many women who had stormed those forbidding gates could summon the aid of such a daughter as Barbara?

That Barbara might fail her did not occur to Mrs. "Billy" until after the airy structure of plans and hopes was fully completed. The incident of the garden frocks brought enlightenment. There were four of these frocks, filmy creations in pastel shades. Mrs. "Billy" had ordered them for Barbara as a pleasing surprise. Barbara viewed them with obvious dismay.

"And *picture hats*, mother!" Barbara's delicately etched eyebrows lifted a little.

"Would you prefer sunbonnets?"

But Barbara ignored the sarcasm. "Really, it is very nice of you, mother, but I wish you hadn't. I am not going on exhibition, am I? I thought your

guests were all to be middle-aged, married people?"

"Mr. Cheltingham is neither middle-aged nor married."

"Mr. Cheltingham! Who is he?"

"He is English. His uncle is an earl." Try as she might, Mrs. "Billy" could not suppress the note of triumph.

"Ah, indeed!" Barbara shot a keen glance at her mother. "So that explains the pastel costumes and the picture hats?"

"It explains nothing of the sort, Barbara."

Barbara, however, went serenely on. "Mr. Cheltingham's uncle is an earl, and mummer dear has hopes, has she? Well, mummer dear needn't. I dislike Englishmen. As for nephews of earls, I despise them."

Out of the abrupt wreck of her shattered air-castle Mrs. "Billy" smiled coldly on her daughter. So Barbara still had a temper of her own? This, at least, was a Barbara she could understand. It was the calm, self-contained, silent Barbara that had puzzled her.

"Another college whim, Barbara?"

"It is not a whim. I have the best of reasons for not liking Englishmen."

"They must be interesting, I am sure; based on your wide experience, of course?"

"Exactly; on a personal experience."

"Ah!" Mrs. "Billy" prepared her ears for a confidential recital. It had been long since Barbara had so favored her.

"It was not a pleasant experience. Some day I will tell you about it."

"Why not now, Barbara?" urged Mrs. "Billy."

"I had rather not. Is it not enough to know that I dislike Englishmen?"

"Perhaps you will find Mr. Cheltingham an exception."

"It is more probable that I shall despise him thoroughly."

"Very well," said Mrs. "Billy," apparently resigned to this ultimatum. "But how shall we prevent his coming? He's been asked, you know."

"Oh, let him come. I shall manage him. He will not come again. And

there are to be no more hopes, you know, mother."

It sounded ominous, yet Mrs. "Billy" smiled. After all, it was nothing more than another of Barbara's whims. In a few days, in a week, at least, Mrs. "Billy" thought that she should know this Barbara of hers.

But now, glancing across the breakfast-table at the regal young person who sipped hot milk and nibbled at well-browned toast, she realized that she did not know Barbara at all. She doubted if she ever would. It was not a comforting reflection. She felt rather silly over finding herself in such an absurd position. And the house-party and the coming of Mr. Cheltingham were events of tomorrow.

II

THE noon train of the next day brought the Dickinsons, the Thayer-Braytons, and a few others. The 3.15 added the Monkses and the Ringmont contingent. Between trains came the Ivinges in their big red touring-car. On the six-o'clock express came Mr. Lawrence Cheltingham. As he drove up in the station wagonette he was chatting in a friendly way with the Redkirk coachman. He grinned broadly when stout Mrs. Mortimer Monks murmured her appreciation "at meeting your grace."

Mr. William Redkirk, who had been none too much at his ease in playing host to the rather stiff-necked gentlemen among his wife's guests, greeted Cheltingham with hearty welcome. To Mrs. Monks's horror he slapped him on the back.

"I've been waiting for you, Larry!" he exclaimed. "Come on down to the billiard-room and we'll handle the cues until it's time to dress for—"

A glance from Mrs. "Billy" cut him short.

"Well, what's the matter?" he asked meekly.

"Will not the billiards keep until

after dinner, dear? I want you to find Barbara now and bring her here."

Mr. Cheltingham favored his host with a grimace. "Run along now, and be good," he advised. Then, to Mrs. "Billy": "So the young lady has come home from school, has she? That's good. I'm a great hand at getting on well with little girls."

"Little girls!" exclaimed Mrs. "Billy." Then she remembered that he could have no idea of Barbara. "You will find her rather a good-sized girl, I think."

"Oh, the bigger the better. I've a strong liking for girls, from two feet up to six, from six years up to sixty. I don't like 'em over six feet tall, though, and I lose interest in them when they're older than sixty."

Talk of this kind seemed to be no more effort to Larry Cheltingham than breathing. He had a habit of assuming a slight brogue, of which he was rather proud. "I get it from my grandmother, who was an O'Rourke," he was fond of explaining. "It's all she did leave me, and it's the only legacy I never spent."

Mrs. "Billy" listened to him smilingly.

"Frankly, I do not expect you to get on well with Barbara, Mr. Cheltingham. She tells me that she dislikes Englishmen."

"She's been studying about the Revolution. It's Irish I'll be to her. I can do it without half trying, and—" Cheltingham left the sentence tailless.

Coming toward them was Billy Redkirk, accompanied by a vision in delicate French grays. Even Mrs. "Billy" caught her breath and experienced a little shiver of gratified surprise. It was the first time she had seen Barbara in anything save severe black or plain white.

"Cleopatra, Venus and Helen of Troy!" said Cheltingham under his breath. "And who might this be, Mrs. Redkirk?"

"It's—it's Barbara," she said, a little chokingly. Even when she had planned those gowns, had pictured to herself how Barbara would look in them, she

had wholly failed to anticipate such harmony of form and color.

"Is it, now! And here I was expecting a miss with her skirts above her boot-tops! Saints defend me, Mrs. Redkirk, but I shall be telling her what a beauty she is the minute I open my mouth! Have I your leave for that?"

"You must reckon with Barbara first," laughed Mrs. "Billy." "I can see difficulties ahead for you."

Then Barbara arrived. As a pilgrim before a shrine bowed Mr. Cheltingham. As a rose nodding haughtily on its stem Barbara acknowledged the salaam.

"That's my very best bow, Miss Redkirk," said Cheltingham, "but it does my intentions poor justice. Imagine me on my knees."

At his first words she started. The delicate pink of her cheeks and ears deepened. She shut her hands tightly, and into her calm eyes came an odd expression.

"I shall imagine nothing of the sort, Mr. Cheltingham; it would be very embarrassing."

"On one knee, then."

"That custom belongs to obsolete chivalry. In this age men kneel only to the dollar."

"Then I am born a century too late. Mrs. Redkirk"—here he turned to Mrs. "Billy."—"I am going to carry your daughter off out of your hearing and tell how you deceived me about her. Will you come, Miss Redkirk?" and he extended an inviting hand to Barbara.

"Yes," said Barbara, ignoring the proffered hand, "I believe I will."

"What a talker Larry is!" observed Billy Redkirk, looking after them as they walked toward the imitation Italian garden.

"It seems that our Barbara has a tongue, too," commented Mrs. "Billy."

Lawrence Cheltingham was making the same discovery. He was being talked to in a manner that was as surprising to him as it was disturbing. No sooner had Barbara heard his voice than she decided to do it. It was the

only logical course. In justice to herself and in fairness to him he must be told. She went about the telling in no indirect fashion.

"Please do not make any more gallant speeches, Mr. Cheltingham," she began. "It is useless. I have the advantage of knowing your real motive for saying such things to me."

"Then you've read my thoughts?"

"Nothing so subtle as that. But once I was compelled to listen while you made an astonishing revelation."

"Sounds mysterious," suggested Cheltingham.

"It isn't in the least. Do you recall being in a dining-car on the New York limited from Boston early in June?"

"I was there," he admitted. "Were you, too?"

"At the next table. I remember you by your voice. You were talking to a friend—a fellow-Englishman, I judged."

"Right! That would be Tivvy Winthrop. We'd been playing a match down at Beverly Farms."

"But you were not talking of polo. I couldn't help overhearing. The subject was the American girl."

"Was it, now? I'll wager Tivvy started that talk. He has presumption enough to think he could do the subject justice. It's a thing I'd never attempt single-handed. The girls of America! Of course, we Britishers talk about them, unless we're tongue-tied."

Barbara had stopped by a carved marble seat. Her calm eyes were taking stock of Cheltingham. She saw a well-groomed, compactly built man of about her own height, which was five feet eight. His eyes were blue-gray and audacious. His reddish brown hair was inclined to curl. So were his mouth corners. She decided that he was either very brazen or very forgetful. She chose to assume the latter.

"Pardon me, but you must remember that I overheard your conversation."

Cheltingham could misunderstand neither the look nor the tone, yet he appeared perplexed.

"We—I—that is, there was nothing

offensive, I hope? It was not meant to be, I'm sure." This was what he said to her. Of himself he demanded vainly, "What the deuce did we say?"

"Whether it was offensive or inoffensive, I shall not presume to judge. But it has made a lasting impression on my mind. I thought that you ought to know this. It may help us to understand each other better during the next few days."

Cheltingham looked slightly bewildered.

"I can't for the life of me think what we could have said," he declared. "It couldn't have been anything that wasn't nice, for Tivvy's almost a prig about that sort of thing."

"It was, I suppose, something which any gentleman would feel privileged to say anywhere."

"Thank heaven! For a minute I was afraid I might have cursed the porter, they're such highway robbers! But now tell me what we *did* say before my red hair turns gray with the worry of it."

Barbara sniffed scornfully. "I will. You were discussing the necessity of marrying an American girl, a rich one. Your friend suggested that it was the only certain way to escape working for a living. You agreed with him. You confided to him, and to half the car besides, that you had your eye on two or three likely ones. Am I right, Mr. Cheltingham?"

He groaned. "We said it, bad luck to us, every word of it!"

Barbara smiled loftily. "It may be unnecessary for me to ask that, in the event of my name being reckoned among the 'likely ones,' you strike it from the list."

"But, my dear young lady, we——"

"I think I understand your attitude," she interrupted. "It is not an unusual one. I believe I do not care to say anything more on the subject."

At least, that was all she did say, for she turned very quickly and quitted the garden, leaving Cheltingham in a most unenviable frame of mind and gazing blankly at the carved marble seat.

"And she believes we meant it!" he ejaculated at last. "Tivvy, Tivvy, may the devil take you! You've no more sense of humor than a Hottentot, and yet you will joke in public. I'm in for it now. Here's a Lady Beautiful that makes me out with no better reputation than a stray dog in a butcher's shop. Larry, will you stand that? I will not. I'll show her ladyship that I'm really a saint who's mislaid his halo. She shall believe that if it takes me the rest of the summer."

As a beginning he filled his briar and sat down to smoke over it, revealing himself at once as a true philosopher. Reflection was needed. He must try to get a glimpse of himself as Barbara Redkirk saw him.

An heiress chaser! Mr. Cheltingham, whose uncle was an earl, chuckled. It was rather a novel view. It would have been somewhat entertaining to a score, more or less, of ambitious English mothers. Yet he had been convicted by his own words. True, when he and Tivvy had exchanged wails because of a common woe—a temporary lack of as much ready money as they could find uses for—Tivvy had been entirely facetious in his suggestion. Also, he, Cheltingham, had replied in kind.

But how was a certain magnificent young person with shell-tinted cheeks and a limited sense of proportion to be blamed for accepting such obtuse humor as fact? First she had heard him declare that he meant to marry a rich American girl. Next she found him under her own roof paying extravagant compliments to herself. Promptly she revolts. Her high-strung American spirit brushes aside conventions and—well, she lays him out, tells him exactly what she thinks of him.

And now shall he explain that it was just a bit of chaff between them, summoning Tivvy as witness for the defense? Hardly. A truth that sounds like a weak lie—and some truths can sound that way occasionally—had better be left unspoken. Nor could he confess that, while he was quite apt to express an admiration for all femi-

nine loveliness, his enthusiasm had no personal import. This, too, was a fact, but it would sound awkward, if stated. Something of the sort was necessary, however, if he was to convince this radiant young woman that he coveted neither her hand nor her fortune.

At this point Cheltingham suddenly decided that he had indulged long enough in serious thought. Life was too brief to be wasted in any such fashion. Solemn reflections might be well enough for some persons who rarely got into perplexing situations; but for himself, who was rarely free from them, it was a luxury.

"I'll just brass it out and trust to luck," said Mr. Cheltingham. Having come to this decision, he followed Barbara into the house.

III

At a house-party, American style, persons are bound to become very well acquainted with one another. There is no escaping it, for our hostesses pursue the business of entertaining with relentless vigor.

As early as noon of the second day Mrs. "Billy" knew that she had achieved many triumphs. Mrs. Thayer-Brayton had told her all about her divorce, the Dickinsons had hinted of a Florida yachting cruise, stout old Mortimer Monks had shown an embarrassing fondness for her society, and Mrs. Ivings had frankly envied her on the presence of Mr. Cheltingham, nephew of an earl. As Mrs. "Billy" viewed it, those frowning gates of Newport were about to open for her. She would have Billy engage a cottage for next season at once.

Standing under a striped marquee sun shelter, which had been stuck up on the edge of the tennis courts, she was watching her distinguished guests getting as much fun as possible out of the archery contest. Always a striking figure, now gracefully erect, her eyes brilliant with the pride of the hour, her elaborate casing of silk and lace falling in long, sweeping lines about

her, Mrs. "Billy" had almost a queenly air. One instant she charmed a guest with a gracious glance, in the next she sent a servant hurrying on some errand simply by a look. Serene, admirably poised, she was playing the part of *grande dame* to the life. With wings she might have posed for a figure of Victory.

Billy had been summoned to the house by a telephone call. He had taken Cheltingham along with him, to the satisfaction of Barbara, whom Aunt Emily was urging to try a dish of orange sherbet. The others were all out at the straw targets, counting the score, so for a moment it was a family grouping under the marquee.

This was a most fortunate arrangement, for when Billy came stalking back across the lawn he walked up to his wife and blurted out with crude savagery:

"The devil's to pay, Edith!"

The light of triumph died quickly from her eyes, and a distinctly unpleasant expression had flashed into them when she saw that close behind her husband was Cheltingham.

"Why, Billy dear, whatever is the matter?" She made a half-hearted attempt at a laugh, which ended wretchedly as she caught sight of her husband's face. It was not pleasant to look upon. It was a pasty gray in color. The eyes stared unseeingly and there were heavy bags under them. He dropped wearily into a lawn seat under the tent.

"Billy, what is it?" demanded Mrs. Redkirk, suddenly alarmed. She was both startled and vexed. Had Billy chosen this inopportune time to be ill? Miserable as he looked she could have shaken him.

"I'm afraid he's heard some bad news," suggested Cheltingham. "Looked as if he'd got it hard when he came from the telephone, so I trailed along. I was afraid he'd knock under on the way. Heart isn't strong, is it? But he'll come around all right in a minute. I'll just loosen his collar. Here, I've a brandy flask handy. Just a swallow, Redkirk. There, old man, that'll do you good."

In a very businesslike manner Mr. Cheltingham, who seemed to know just what he was about, proceeded to spur into normal action the balky blood pump of his host. He did it, too, without any fuss at all. In a moment or so Billy had found his voice again.

"Lawyers—over the 'phone—will case gone against us—claimant gets decision!" he panted laboriously. Then gathering strength for a connected sentence, and waving his hand toward the guests who were watching the ridiculous shots of Mrs. Ivings, he sputtered hoarsely: "It's all up, Edith. You might as well tell them to go home. We're beggars! Anyway, we'll be beggars tomorrow."

Mrs. "Billy" darted an agonized look at Cheltingham. That gentleman's face had turned very red, and he immediately abandoned the job of steadying Mr. Redkirk in the seat.

"I—I beg pardon," said Cheltingham quickly. "I didn't mean to intrude. I'll clear out until he comes to himself."

"Please don't," said Mrs. "Billy" promptly. "I want you to stay now and help me find out what has happened. I'm afraid there's something in it." Then, to her husband: "Billy, who was it called you up?"

"Trent & Packham."

"Ah!" She drew in a quick breath as if summoning courage. They were the attorneys for the estate. "Just what was it they said, Billy?"

"I've told you. That woman's won. We're beggars. She'll turn us out of here tomorrow." He was leaning forward, his head in his hands, all his limp bulk confessing the abjectness of his craven nature.

Mrs. "Billy" regarded him with ill-concealed disgust.

"Could you get him into the house, out of sight somewhere?" she said to Cheltingham pleadingly. "I'm bitterly ashamed to ask it of you, but——"

"You needn't be. I'll do it."

"You must let me help you, mother." Barbara, rather white of face but steady-eyed and calm, had come forward.

"No, I want you to stay here and keep things going while I ring up those fool lawyers and find out for myself what has gone wrong. Don't worry, Barbara. There's probably some mistake. Don't let them suspect. Give out the prizes and see that refreshments are served. I'll be back soon. Can you do it?"

"Yes, I can do it." She said it quietly but convincingly.

In low, unhurried tones, Mrs. "Billy" gave a few orders to servants, then slipped away into the house. Aunt Emily, whose eyes and ears had been alert, followed her silently to the billiard-room, where the telephone was placed.

"Go back," ordered Mrs. "Billy" on discovering her.

Aunt Emily, her eyes keenly expectant, planted herself in a chair.

Mrs. "Billy," the receiver at her ear, waved a protesting hand. "Go back and stay with Barbara until I send for you."

Aunt Emily wagged her head stubbornly.

"Stay where you are, then," said Mrs. "Billy" wearily. "Hello! Hello! Is this Trent & Packham's?"

It was not. Somewhere off in that mysterious distance which lies behind the transmitter, a feminine voice was demanding complainingly why the lamb and green peas had not been sent up. This ceased abruptly, and a blank silence followed. Then came a mighty buzzing, a babel of sound, as if the billiard-room of Cresthills had suddenly become detached and hurled into a vast factory where worlds were being made in furious haste. There were groans and shoutings and the crash of great machines. Presently out of this hubbub a voice asked cheerfully, "Are you through?"

So it was fully a half-hour before Mrs. "Billy" was ready to face her hastily summoned family council, which had assembled in Mr. Redkirk's den, a bizarrely furnished apartment on the ground floor. Cheltingham had been prevailed upon to make one of the little group.

"I want you to tell me what I ought to do," explained Mrs. "Billy." "Besides, having heard a little, it is best for you to know exactly how matters stand." There was no hint of weakness about her firm chin, none in her clear-cut sentences; only, her eyes no longer held that look of triumph.

"If you think I can be of any help I'll be glad to stand by," said Cheltingham. "There is trouble, I take it?"

"Almost as bad as Billy said. The claimant has won. We have known of this suit, of course. It has been dragging through the courts for three years. But our lawyers always assured us that the woman was an impostor and the new will a forgery. She had known Jeremiah and he had given her more or less money, but she had no right to assume his name."

Mrs. "Billy" paused to shrug her shoulders and make a wry face.

"It's our family skeleton I'm parading now," she continued, still addressing Cheltingham. "Not that I take any pride in it. But everyone will know the story by tomorrow. The morning papers will be full of it. Mr. Trent says it can't be hushed up. Jeremiah Redkirk—Billy's father, you know—was not what you would call a proper old person. Along in his seventies, after he had been a widower for ten years, he began to sow a late crop of wild oats. We are just reaping some of the harvest. There's no saying how bad things are; the lawyers can't tell yet. They have promised to let me know later, possibly tonight."

"But just now what I want to know is how to get rid of those people out there. I can't tell them all this. I should die of shame. And I can't let them stay here and find it out tomorrow for themselves. I want to get them away before it comes out. That's all, just to get them away, so that I can breathe and think and act. Oh, I shall go mad if they stay another hour with this hanging over us. What can I do, Mr. Cheltingham? I know I have no right to ask you to help me, but I must ask someone. What can you suggest?"

Few women would have done it, of course. A good many would have sobbed, or indulged in hysterics. Some would simply have fainted. But Mrs. "Billy" was of more substantial mettle. She had courage, if not ability.

It was the moral courage back of her appeal which aroused the sympathy of Larry Cheltingham. With true British stolidness he had listened to her frank unfolding of this perplexing situation. Also there was aroused within him the Briton's instinct to rush to the aid of the weaker party.

"Let's see what can be done," he said.

It was no simple problem, even for the nephew of an earl, to solve off-hand. Here was a proud, ambitious woman, spurred on by high social aspirations. She had an elaborate home, many servants, abundant means. There was a pretentious function in full swing. Suddenly the golden stream of money which had kept the wheels turning so merrily threatens to dry up. The blight of an old scandal menaces. She must get rid of her guests before the blow falls.

As Larry Cheltingham might have expressed it, he had "knocked about a bit." He had served as subaltern under Kitchener in Egypt, he had bossed a sheep-ranch in Australia, he had prospected around Dawson City, and between times he had ridden polo ponies in many a hard-fought scrimmage. But he was no social strategist. Yet here was someone who needed help at that game. He must think. So he thrust his hands deep into his pockets, strode up and down in the centre of the little group, and tried very hard to think.

A young woman with big, expressive eyes watched him narrowly. Barbara had small faith in Mr. Cheltingham's thinking ability. Aunt Emily watched him, too, but furtively, from behind her handkerchief. She had realized that her material comforts were in danger, so she wept. William Redkirk sat in a corner, blinking sullenly, like an overgrown school-boy whom the teacher has thrashed.

Mrs. "Billy," her hands clasped tightly behind her back, stood looking out at the scene on the wide, velvety lawn. It was rather a picturesque scene. The women out there were not all tall and stately—some of them had positively plain features; but the art of the modiste had not been spared. Their gowns were striking. One or two of the men were insignificant to look at, some were far too stout to be imposing, but their names were very well-known names. One read of them as boxholders at the Opera and Horse Show, as cottagers at exclusive resorts. Yes, they were the right sort of people.

They were gathering under Mrs. "Billy's" marquee, to be served with ices by Mrs. "Billy's" deft-handed maids. An hour ago she had watched them with keen satisfaction. Now her right hand was gripping the left so tightly that a ring was cutting into her palm.

At the end of several minutes Cheltingham broke the silence by asking:

"You wouldn't mind my telling them a whopper, would you?"

"Oh, anything that will send them away quickly."

"Well, I've thought of something, but——"

"Then for heaven's sake do it, Mr. Cheltingham. Please do it! I am getting nervous by the minute."

"But you might think it rather——"

"I don't care what it is if it persuades them to go away without my having to meet them again."

"Then I'll try it on at once."

Without further parley he started on his mission.

IV

WHATEVER other qualities Cheltingham's ruse might have possessed, it had the merit of being successful—startlingly so. Also it was simple of operation, amazingly simple.

He did no more than take the arm of stout old Mortimer Monks, draw him to one side and talk for a moment in a con-

fidential manner. From the gestures of Mr. Monks an observer would gather that he had heard something most surprising. Promptly he broke away from Cheltingham and puffed ponderously back to the tent, where he whispered in the ear of Mrs. Monks. That lady dropped a sherbet glass and collapsed in a chair. Then Mr. Monks had to explain to the other ladies. The agitation spread.

In two minutes the whole party appeared to be engaged in a joint debate of the liveliest kind. As it was conducted most irregularly, all the women talking at once and the men making futile endeavors to introduce system and order, the affair promised to go on indefinitely, when the Thayer-Braytons broke away and headed directly for the carriage-drive leading to the highway.

That started the stampede. By twos and threes the others followed, casting apprehensive glances at the Cresthills mansion as they went. Mrs. Ivings quite unconsciously bore away with her a half-eaten ice, while Mr. Dickinson seemed equally unaware that, like a middle-aged and respectably draped Cupid, he carried an ornate, arrow-filled quiver slung across his back.

Traces of a grin lurked in Larry Cheltingham's mouth corners as he returned to make his report.

"For goodness' sake, Mr. Cheltingham, what did you tell them?" demanded Mrs. "Billy," meeting him at the door of the den.

"Well, it worked a little sooner than I expected," he responded, evading a direct answer. "But they're gone."

"I should think they had," assented Mrs. "Billy."

"Like a flock of scared geese. I tried to do it easy, too."

"But what *did* you say?"

"It was a whopper, Mrs. Redkirk. I told you it would be a whopper, you know."

"Yes, but what kind of a whopper?"

With some reluctance, and in his own way, Cheltingham made his explanation.

"When I was looking for gold up in

Alaska, and not finding it, I heard a yarn about two men who made a big strike. They were away off on the trail, twenty miles from Dawson, but the woods were full of prospectors, and they wanted to keep their luck quiet until they could get word to some friends. They worked a pretty slick game, too, while they were waiting. One of them goes to bed in the tent and the other stands outside. When a prospector came along the chap outside would hail him and ask if he knew anything about doctoring. He would say that his partner, back in the tent, was down with smallpox and——"

"Smallpox!" exclaimed Mrs. "Billy."
"You didn't say that——"

"No, I didn't get as far as that. I merely hinted to Mr. Monks that one of the maids was ill, that I didn't know positively what the disease was, but that if it should be smallpox— Well, he didn't wait to hear any more. It wasn't a very brilliant scheme of mine, I admit, but I wanted to do something, and that——"

"It's all right, I suppose," said Mrs. "Billy" weakly. "I am grateful. I don't care what they think now. They are gone, gone!"

"But there go some more, mother. Look!"

Barbara was pointing to the window through which could be seen passing the Ivinges' big touring-car. Truly, there were some more, a dozen or fifteen. Never, perhaps, was the capacity of a tonneau taxed as was that one. Not only were all the seats filled, but the whole body was packed with passengers. Men clung to the steps. Two rode forward on the hood. The roof of the car was piled with luggage.

"Why, there's Marie! And Tapley! And the chef! And the waitresses! Mother, all the servants are there!"

This seemed a very accurate statement of the case. The Cresthills corps, reinforced by the maids of the guests, were all jammed into the big red auto, like musicians in a circus band-wagon. As the vehicle slowly took the curve before dropping down the grade of the

carriage-road those within the house could read panic in their faces. Before anyone could act the car had whirled out of sight.

"What can have happened!" exclaimed Mrs. "Billy," dazed by this new development.

"There were a couple of maids out at the marquee," suggested Cheltingham, looking rather sheepish. "I fancy they must have overheard some of the talk."

"Smallpox!" In a whisper, as if reluctant to hear her own voice say it, Mrs. "Billy" named the dread contagion.

"Wait," said Barbara. "I'm going to see if there are any left." She walked hurriedly through the vacant rooms. She called. She rang bells. Then she came back to announce, "Not one!"

This aroused Aunt Emily. "But who is to cook the meals and help me dress and do all the other things?" Sternly, accusingly she made these demands of Cheltingham.

Prompted by sheer egoism though it was, this proved to be a most enlightening query. It stripped the situation of all obscuring frills, brushed aside all uncertain, contingent consequences and stated baldly the one imminent calamity. Cresthills was servantless!

Cheltingham seemed to be afflicted with a perverted sense of humor. In some way or other he managed to view this wail of the sleek, aggrieved Aunt Emily as funny. At least, he did not repress a grin.

Mrs. "Billy," however, saw only the tragedy. She slipped despairingly down on the window-seat and hid her face in her hands. Observing this, but still unenlightened, Cheltingham turned to look inquiringly at Barbara. Then he wished he had looked elsewhere. She gave him one withering glance and then turned her back on him.

"Whew!" Cheltingham began mopping his red face. "I say, now," he continued, "I'm awfully sorry. Don't take it so hard, all of you. They'll

come back, won't they, when they find it isn't so?"

"Who is to tell them it isn't so?" demanded Barbara icily, over her shoulder.

"Why—why, I'll tell them. I'll go right away and fetch 'em back."

"And what will you tell the guests, Mr. Cheltingham?" asked Mrs. "Billy."

"No, we'll just have to let them go. I'll try to get some others from town."

"But Tapley has been with us seven years!" moaned Aunt Emily.

Unscathingly did Cheltingham denounce himself as a bungling meddler, and to no purpose. Mrs. "Billy" protested that he must not say such things. He had meant well. Anyway, he had rid the house of guests. She was thankful for that. Perhaps by tomorrow she could get a new lot of servants.

"Tomorrow!" croaked her husband. "Tomorrow we'll be beggars."

"Don't be a baby," snapped Mrs. "Billy."

At the end of a half-hour Cheltingham desperately announced that he meant to do something. He would walk down to the village and try to find some of the servants. He would find Tapley, the butler, and a maid or two, assure them privately that no one was ill, and bring them back with him.

He had been gone but a little while when he came back, crestfallen and alone.

"Well," said Mrs. "Billy," "couldn't you find any of them?"

"I didn't have a chance. I was stood up down there at the forks of the road, by a chuckle-headed country constable with a double-barreled shotgun."

"Stood up!" cried Mrs. "Billy" incredulously.

"That's what we used to call it in Alaska. Said he'd fill me full of shot if I didn't come back. He meant it, too, blast his eyes! Had his gun all cocked."

"It's an outrage," declared Mrs. "Billy."

"Yes, I told him something of the

sort. But he wouldn't argue the point. He says we're quarantined."

Mrs. "Billy" echoed the word aghast. So did Barbara; likewise Aunt Emily.

"He was kind enough to inform me," continued Cheltingham, "that there were two bad cases of smallpox up here, that a whole crowd of our folks were now being fumigated and vaccinated in the Town Hall, and that the authorities did not propose to let any more of us escape."

"Our folks! Being fumigated in the Town Hall!" gasped Mrs. "Billy."

"Why, do you suppose he could have meant the Thayer-Braytons, the Dickinsons, and all those?"

"Fancy they are the ones—with the servants. The constable said they had rounded up two lots of refugees and that if any more came he was prepared to shoot. It's a beautiful mess I've got you into, Mrs. Redkirk. As I said before, I'm an ass, a prize ass." He said it very feelingly this time.

Mrs. "Billy" paid no heed. Before her mind was the spectacle of the distinguished Mrs. Thayer-Brayton, haughty, dignified, exclusive; of stout, irritable old Mortimer Monks; of all the other members of that select company, herded in a hall with Tapley and Marie and the other servants, and forced to undergo the indignities of needless fumigation and vaccination.

"Oh, oh, oh!" groaned Mrs. "Billy." "They will never forgive me, never!"

The telephone bell rang at this moment.

"Please see who it is?" she asked of Cheltingham.

Having answered the call, he announced: "It's the chairman of the Board of Health. He wants to know if he shall send up a physician."

"Tell him to mind his— No, tell him, please, that we have all the medical aid we require," replied Mrs. "Billy" wearily.

There ensued two or three profitless and uncomfortable hours, during which the remaining occupants of Cresthills did little more than try to appraise, according to their various natures, the probable results of this

fantastic trick which Fate had played them.

Mrs. "Billy," dry-eyed and almost motionless, seemed to be waiting for the next turn of the wheel. Her husband stared moodily at the floor. Aunt Emily threw herself on a leather-covered couch and sniffed plaintively. Larry Cheltingham paced aimlessly through the rooms and hallway. Now he chuckled and now he swore softly under his breath. As for Barbara, she had gone upstairs with a book.

It was nearly six o'clock when Aunt Emily broke the miserable spell by getting on her feet and facing Mrs. "Billy."

"Edith!" she exclaimed.

Mrs. "Billy" looked up at her listlessly.

"Edith," she repeated in a grieved tone, "I've eaten nothing but cake and sherbet since breakfast. Where is my dinner coming from and how soon will it be ready?"

Dinner! Where, indeed, was it to come from? Mrs. "Billy" thought of the deserted kitchen, of the servantless dining-room. During more than a score of years of married life she had occasionally stood almost on the verge of this domestic chasm, but always, at the eleventh hour, the abyss had been bridged. Twice the invaluable Tapley had stepped nobly to the rescue. But where was Tapley now? Locked up with the Thayer-Braytons in the Valeburg Town Hall! Once Marie had saved the day. And Marie was with Tapley, and with the Monksees, being fumigated.

Blankly, helplessly did Mrs. "Billy" face the fact that there were five persons still at Cresthills. Shudderingly she recalled that at least one of them was very hungry, and that another was the nephew of an earl.

V

"WELL?" demanded Aunt Emily at last.

"I'm sure, Emily, I can't tell you anything about dinner. I can't get

it. I wouldn't know how." And Mrs. "Billy" made a gesture of despair.

"Then I suppose I must starve," whined Aunt Emily, beginning to sniffle once more.

She did not starve, however, for not long after this Barbara appeared in the door to announce cheerfully:

"Come, I think you had all better have some dinner; it's ready."

She had changed her French gray garden frock for a shirt-waist and walking-skirt and she had enveloped herself in a huge white apron. Her sleeves were rolled back over her perfectly modeled arms. Her cheeks were very red, save where there were daubs of flour on them. Cheltingham eyed her approvingly.

"Dinner!" exclaimed Mrs. "Billy."

"Who got it?"

"Why, I did, of course." Barbara said it as if she had always been getting dinners.

"But you can't cook, can you, Barbara?" asked her mother.

"I have written essays on the chemistry of foods, and I have studied the cook-book all the afternoon. Still, I'm afraid my biscuits are not all they should be. I expect I left out some of the things or got them together wrong. But they're hot. The other things I found in the refrigerator, and if Mr. Cheltingham will overlook——"

"He will," said that gentleman.

"He feels very much honored—and he's disgracefully hungry."

There was no lack of room at the table. It had been laid for twenty.

They had barely ended the meal when remorseless Fate, in the person of Mr. Trent, of Trent & Packham, put the finishing touch to the present wretchedness of the house of Redkirk. Mrs. "Billy" came from the telephone looking worn and haggard. She had heard the worst, she said.

The new will, which the court had accepted, was a sweeping document. It gave the whole estate, including real and personal property, stocks, bonds and all other sources of income, entirely and unreservedly to the alleged widow of Jeremiah Redkirk, the

claimant person. To be sure, Mr. Trent was quite certain that this will was a rank forgery. He had promptly appealed the case, and was investigating the somewhat vague record of the woman in question. He hoped to discover things that would reverse the decision at the next term.

Unfortunately, however, the Redkirk millions were tied up hard and fast by an intricate maze of legal red tape. Acting with unscrupulous promptness and under the advice of her lawyers, the claimant had stormed the Redkirk city house and was there entrenched. Injunctions had been issued forbidding the attorneys of the Redkirk estate from paying out any funds, and a receiver for the entire property had been appointed.

"I told you, Edith, I told you!" moaned William Redkirk. "We're beggars. They'll put us out tomorrow."

Impatiently Mrs. "Billy" waved him to be silent, and continued her statement.

"Mr. Trent assures me that so long as we retain possession here we cannot be disturbed—at least, not until the appealed case has been decided against us. A deputy sheriff will be sent here to see that we do not sell or destroy any of the property, but he cannot force us out, and will not attempt to do so. And," she concluded bitterly, "that is about all we have left—a roof over our heads."

The sniffing of Aunt Emily punctuated the hush which followed. Billy Redkirk, looking a helpless mass of misery, stared at his wife, open-mouthed. Barbara began biting her lip. The atmosphere seemed almost damp from unshed tears.

Lawrence Cheltingham began to be very uncomfortable. He felt like a wedding guest who has strayed into the wrong house and has stumbled upon a funeral. He would have liked very much to have said something comforting and cheering, but he could think of nothing at all in that line. Abruptly the fact came home to him that he was very much out of place.

Making as little stir as possible, he arose from the table and left the room. Once outside he drew in a long breath of the sweet, July-scented evening air.

"Poor beggars!" he whispered to himself.

He strode across the lawn to where the striped marquee glimmered in the moonlight. Scattered about were the pathetic reminders of how bravely the day had begun, how sorrowfully it had ended. On the little tables were sherbet glasses partly filled with syrupy liquid. Fans and a fluffy parasol or two littered the chairs. On one table were spread out the costly knickknacks which had been meant for prizes. At a distance were the straw targets with arrows sticking in them, recalling the silly game which had been so hastily abandoned.

"It's a tremendous cropper they've come," soliloquized Mrs. "Billy's" most distinguished and sole remaining guest. "But the girl takes it like a thoroughbred. Who would have thought it, too! Why, I expected to see it crumple her like a trampled posy. Never a whimper, though! Instead, she tackles biscuits! And I took her for one of the matinee kind. No wonder she had the courage to lay me out so neatly. She's a new sort to me. I'd like to see how she pulls through this, hang me if I wouldn't! Wonder what she's up to now?"

As he turned to glance back at the dark bulk of the house he saw a figure in white steal out of a side door and cautiously move along the line of shrubbery leading toward the stables. Also he caught a glint of something suggesting a revolver. A dim light was visible in one of the stable windows, probably in the coachman's office. Promptly Cheltingham gave chase. As he neared the figure in white he whistled softly.

"Who are you?" The voice was low and tense. It came from behind a bush, and was accompanied by a sharp, metallic click.

"Cheltingham," he responded hastily.

"Oh!" There was much relief in

that exclamation. Barbara stepped from behind the bush and handed him a revolver. "Please take the thing. will you? I—I'm afraid it will go off. There's someone in the stables. I don't know who it can be, but I must find out. They know in the village that all the servants have left. It may be robbers."

Cheltingham laughed as he accepted the weapon.

"So you go hunting robbers all alone, do you? Where is your father?"

"I didn't tell him anything about seeing the light in the stables. He is worried enough, as it is. But do you think there are robbers out there?"

Cheltingham said it was most unlikely. He would investigate, however.

She watched him steal noiselessly across the lawn and approach a door next to the lighted window. She heard him throw a handful of pebbles against the glass. In a moment the door was opened cautiously, and there ensued a brief scuffle. Two minutes later Cheltingham appeared before her with an old, whiskered and badly frightened individual securely gripped by the collar.

"I've landed one," he announced. "There are others in the stable, but I've locked them in."

"Why, it's Peter!" exclaimed Barbara.

"Yis, mum," assented the prisoner; "it's me, though I'm that shook up I'm glad to hear you say it. I had to come back. I couldn't bear to think of those poor horses and cows and hens suffering without their suppers. So Mary an' me sneaked back. We'll go away again, though, if you say we must."

Peter, it seemed, was the gardener. Mary, his wife, was the laundress. They had been hiding in the woods all the afternoon, not having been included in the auto-load of refugees. On being reassured as to the absence of all contagion at Cresthills, and on learning the real trouble which had come to the Redkirks, they promptly announced their intention of staying as long as they were allowed.

"You'll run the risk of going hungry," suggested Barbara. "We're going to be frightfully poor."

But their loyal hearts were unshaken by this prospect. Peter was too good a gardener and Mary too much of a cook, each asserted of the other, for any such thing to be possible.

"You are both jewels," said Barbara as she left with Cheltingham for the house. She went inside, but soon came out on the portico, where Cheltingham was smoking in the moonlight.

"There's too much tragedy inside," she explained. "Mother is pacing the floor like Lady Macbeth in the sleep-walking scene, father is looking like a man about to be hanged, and Aunt Emily is sniffing again. I wish they wouldn't. It doesn't do any good."

Over his pipe-bowl Cheltingham looked curiously at her. He had a great desire to tell her what a trump she was, but that seemed hardly the appropriate thing. Probably she would have little interest in his opinion of her at that moment. If he could only say something soothing and comforting now!

"Things will look different in the morning," he ventured. "They always do. The lawyers will most likely straighten things out in a week or so."

Barbara shook her head. "No, it will be a long and tedious affair, and we may lose everything in the end. At best, it looks as if we were to be practically paupers for several months. And we don't know how to live without money. We must learn, though. I suppose I am thoroughly heartless, but the prospect does not seem a terrible one to me. I almost believe it will do us good."

"You're something of an optimist, aren't you?"

"Not exactly. But I am dissatisfied with the kind of life we have been living and were going to live. It's so utterly selfish and vapid. Honestly, now, don't you find American society rather a pitiful farce?"

"It's a good deal like society anywhere."

"But there's so much pretense about

it. We are always going to places where we don't want to go, and we are forever meeting a lot of people that we don't care about at all and pretending that we enjoy it. We are not genuine nor honest, even with ourselves. I don't pretend to know how we could change things for the better, and I don't expect to try to change them, but I do know that I am tired of it all, and that I'm not sorry to be out of it, even though I have been thrown out, as one might say. Which talk, I suppose, sounds very foolish to you."

"I wouldn't go so far as to say that, but I don't agree with your view. It wouldn't bore me very badly to live the way you have been living here."

"Yes, I believe I have heard you say something of the sort before—in the dining-car, you know."

Cheltenham chuckled. "I had forgotten that." Then, after a pause, he added, "It's an uncertain business, this heiress hunting."

"American fortunes are so unstable?" suggested Barbara.

"Yes, and the heiresses too wary."

"Now you are jesting," protested Barbara. "I wonder that you can."

"Sometimes I wonder that I can, too."

Barbara was puzzled by this. Was he entirely shameless; or, now that she had become a disinterested party, did he think he could afford to be frank with her? At any rate, it was an interesting revelation, quite in accord with her cynical views regarding men in general and Englishmen in particular. Miss Phoebe Allen would be delighted to hear of this case. Miss Phoebe held the chair of ancient literature at Barbara's college, and one of her pet diversions, when not dwelling on the virtues of old Homer, was to voice her scorn of modern man. Barbara had been much impressed. Now she knew that Miss Phoebe was right. Barbara looked with cold disapproval on this fortune-hunting nephew of an earl. He was calmly refilling his pipe.

"I think I can end this quarantine nonsense in the morning," she announced abruptly. "I shall telephone

the village authorities that it is all a stupid mistake. If they don't believe me they can send a physician to find out."

"Yes, and what then?" asked Cheltenham, busy with a match.

"Why, then you will be able to go away without—without being fumigated, and all that."

"Oh, I see!" he laughed. "And after that, after you have got rid of me, what do you propose doing?"

"I don't know exactly. I shall try to make some plans tomorrow. First I shall investigate the resources of Cresthills. With Peter to help me it ought to be made to produce something."

"It's a good deal like being cast away on an island, isn't it? Only you have a very fertile and charming island here, and you are more comfortably housed than are most castaways. You might advertise for summer boarders. Had you thought of that?"

"Yes, with a shudder. That would be my last resort."

"Your mother may have some plans."

"No. Whatever is done I must do. Mother is too much crushed to do anything. So is my father. But we have got to stay here and hold the fort, and I mean to do it."

"I—I like your grit," said Cheltenham, a little hesitatingly. "What would you say if I should volunteer to stay and help you hold it?"

Barbara considered this a moment before responding.

"Really, I would not know just what to say. I should imagine that you did not quite understand the situation. If we are to make Cresthills furnish us a living we must all work, you know."

"And you think I would be only a drone in the hive? You've no idea how useful I can be when I put my mind to it."

She shook her head.

"You will not care to volunteer, I am sure, when you hear my plans. Besides, it will be much better for your chances to go away. You might find your heiress."

And with this she left him smoking in the moonlight. As a matter of fact, there wasn't much else that he could do.

VI

CHELTINGHAM was astir early in the morning, even before Barbara, who began the new regime by rising long before seven o'clock. He found her laying the cloth for breakfast.

"I've had another talk with our friend, the constable," he announced as he came in. "He says that the town is paying him two dollars a day and that he likes the job. Fifty feet is as near as he would allow me to come to the dead line. He says he will bring up our mail and leave it in a cracker-box at the foot of the hill."

"Did he say anything about the guests and the servants?"

"Yes. They were all shipped out of town in a special train late last night. They were given all the honors of war, the local militia company and the fire department doing escort duty. One fat man—Mr. Monks, I judge—has threatened to sue the town for a fabulous amount."

Barbara tried to hide a smile, but failed.

"I suppose I ought to feel very badly about it," she said.

"Leave that to me; it's all on my head. Can't I help you with the table things?"

"You may ring the breakfast-gong at the foot of the stairs, if you like."

The bell-ringing was futile. No one answered its summons. So, after waiting for a time, Cheltingham and Barbara breakfasted together. The conversation was not brilliant, for each felt under some restraint. It was only when Barbara announced that she was going with Peter to look at the garden that Cheltingham brightened.

"I'd like to go along, too, if you don't mind," he said.

Why he should wish to go Barbara could not imagine, but she made no protest. He was quite enthusiastic

over Peter's vegetables. They were examining the strawberry-bed when their attention was attracted by a man who was standing at the foot of the carriage-drive waving his arms as if beckoning to them.

"I'll go down and see what he wants," offered Cheltingham.

On approaching the stranger Cheltingham saw that he was a short-legged, squatty little man with a round face and restless pop-eyes. He was rather shabbily dressed, but his manner was aggressive and important. At the distance of about twenty paces he raised his hand commandingly.

"That's near enough," he ordered.

Cheltingham obligingly stopped and waited, calmly expectant.

"I am Erastus J. Hicks," announced the squatty little man impressively. "I represent the Marshal of the United States Court of the Third New York District." Then, throwing back his coat, he tapped significantly a nickel-plated shield pinned to his suspender strap.

"Pleased to meet you, Mr. Hicks." Cheltingham gazed at the shield with apparent interest.

"I have been sent here to take charge of this property," continued Mr. Hicks, puffing out his chest and looking severe.

"Why don't you go ahead and take charge, then?" asked Cheltingham soothingly.

"Now, that's all right, young man," retorted Mr. Hicks, wagging his head shrewdly. "I know how things stand here. I've heard all about it. The law sends me to take charge, but it don't say I've got to risk my life a-doing it. I don't propose to come any nearer, but I want to give you my orders right now."

"Think you'd better give them to me, do you?"

"Oh, I don't do any thinking about it. I know. You're the very man I've been waiting around here for two hours to catch sight of. Now, I want you to understand that I'm responsible to the United States for all this property." Here Mr. Hicks waved his

arms around with such vagueness that he might have included half the universe.

"Quite a load of responsibility, I should imagine," suggested Cheltingham.

Mr. Hicks responded that it didn't bother him. He was used to it. "And what's more," he added, "I mean to keep an eye on you folks all the time, even though you don't see me around."

"That will be kind of you, Mr. Hicks."

"No, it won't. It's my duty. I'm here to see that you don't carry away things, nor sell them, nor do any damage. The law says that while you stay here you've got to treat things as if they belonged to someone else. That's what the law says."

When Mr. Hicks had quite finished and Cheltingham had started back up the hill he felt the stern gaze of the pop-eyes following. He reckoned that it struck him just below the shoulder-blades.

For a brief period Cheltingham allowed himself to be entertained by the incident, but then came the thought that the Redkirks would hardly be able to share this irresponsible view. He thought of Barbara and reflected that this aggressively important Mr. Hicks would undoubtedly interfere sadly with the plans which she was making. Hicks was absurd, to be sure, but at the same time he would be a very real tyrant to Barbara.

"Who was it?" she asked.

"The majesty of the law, intensified and personified. His name is Hicks."

"The deputy sheriff?" asked Barbara, with some little awe.

"Exactly. Sherifing is one of his functions, but from what he said I should gather that he was a kind of republican viceroy, a personal representative of the President. His sense of responsibility is vast. I'm afraid he's going to make trouble for you, Miss Redkirk."

Barbara looked nervously toward the spot where Mr. Hicks had been seen standing.

"Oh, he will not bother you while the quarantine lasts. He is too careful of Hicks for that. But when it is lifted you will see quite enough of him."

A worried, baffled look came into Barbara's usually calm eyes. Perhaps it was this which moved Cheltingham to renew his offer of the night before.

"I wish you would let me stay and help you, for awhile, anyway," he said impulsively. "You'll need some help in handling that Hicks fellow, and it would do me good to have the job. Besides, I'm not half so much afraid of work as you seem to think. I have done such a thing before. Will you give me a trial?"

Evidently he was in earnest. Still, Barbara was not convinced of his utility. Doubtfully she regarded this volunteer in correct tweeds and immaculate linen.

"It is very kind of you, of course; but what do you think, for instance, that you could do?"

Cheltingham smiled good-humoredly at her apparent distrust.

"I notice that you have a good flock of sheep over there," he said quite irrelevantly.

"Why, yes. Mother bought them because she thinks they look rather picturesque grazing over the lawn. What of them?"

"They could be put to better use than that. You see, I ought to know something about sheep. I bossed a sheep-ranch for a whole year in Australia. Isn't there a market near here?"

"I understand," said Barbara quickly. "You would count the sheep as a resource. I hadn't thought of that. Yes, there's the village market, but the big summer hotel, down by the Sound, would be better. I am planning to send our surplus vegetables and fruits there."

"Good! A summer hotel, eh? The very thing! They ought to take two or three sheep a week, and berries and asparagus and milk. Suppose I drive over there this forenoon and see if we can't arrange to supply them?"

"Would you? But—" Again she was surveying him doubtfully.

"Well, what now?"

"What do you think your uncle, the earl, would say?"

He laughed heartily at this.

"My respected uncle, the earl, does not bother himself about me. I don't mind telling you that he is trying to forget my very existence. The fact is, I don't stand very well with the earl. He wanted to make a rector out of me and have me settle down in some moss-grown old ruin where he could dole me out a bare living. And I—well, my father had just been made a colonel, he had been through India with Roberts and—and the rectorship didn't seem alluring. So I went into the army and the earl washed his hands of me."

"But your friends, society—" suggested Barbara.

"I shall consult neither my friends nor society. I can despatch and dress a lamb in seven minutes by the watch. I can shear wool and salt hides. Do you take me on?"

Barbara could do no less.

Early the next morning the Crest-hills wagonette was laden as perhaps it had never been laden before. There were boxes of strawberries, bunches of asparagus, baskets filled with peas, and a big can of fresh, creamy milk. All these good things were destined to be offered up to the two hundred and more guests at the big summer hotel on the Sound. The wagonette had become a vegetable cart. Yet the Crest-hills cobs stepped just as high and rattled their pole chains just as proudly as if they were still drawing fashionable folk to and from the station. Possibly they realized that their driver was the nephew of an earl.

Meanwhile the Board of Health physician had come and gone. The quarantine had been raised. The constable with the shotgun had been withdrawn and in his stead had appeared at the front door of the big house, a severe expression in his pop-eyes, and his shiny badge very much in evidence, Mr. Erastus J. Hicks.

Within two minutes after his arrival

Billy Redkirk had threatened to mishandle Mr. Hicks in various alarming ways, and Mr. Hicks was hinting broadly at a resort to firearms when Mrs. "Billy" came on the scene. She spent an hour in soothing the injured feelings of Mr. Hicks, and only half succeeded at that. When Barbara was summoned she examined his papers, looked at the nickel-plated shield and led Mr. Hicks to define his attitude in some detail. It was a hostile attitude. Mr. Hicks dwelt upon his responsibility to the Government for every dollar's worth of property in sight.

"Then you ought to make out a list of all the furniture and other things in the house," said Barbara. "If you don't, how can you know that nothing is taken away while you are here? I'll get a pencil and a blank-book for you and you may begin at once in the library. Perhaps you had better count the books first."

This had not been part of Mr. Hicks's program, but he accepted it and set to work. It was a long job. When Cheltenham returned and had seen a sample of Mr. Hicks's manner he almost begged for the privilege of leading the deputy sheriff out behind the stables and persuading him, after a fashion which he declined to state, to discharge his duties with more courtesy. But Barbara was firm. She would manage Hicks after a method of her own. She would allow no interference with him. And, Barbara being the recognized captain of the little garrison, her commands were obeyed.

For two days Hicks blustered about and bullied everyone who came near. Very calmly did Barbara endure this, listening patiently to his pompous commands and replying meekly, "Yes, Mr. Hicks," or "No, Mr. Hicks," as the case might be. Even Hicks softened a little under this treatment.

Finally, at the end of the second day, when Mr. Hicks was thoroughly tired of making that everlasting list of the multitude of things to be found in the Redkirk mansion, he seated

himself in a shady corner of the veranda and sighed wearily. Then he drew toward him a wicker porch-table and spread out thereon the contents of several paper bags. There were some soda crackers, a cylinder of bologna and a small pie, a baker's pie, one of the ten-cent size, with a varnished top. To this array he added a tin cup filled with water. Opening his pocket-knife, he proceeded to hack off some irregular slices of bologna.

Mr. Hicks went about all this with much deliberation. He betrayed no eagerness to begin his meal. It was not to be expected that he should. Bologna and crackers and baker's pie may answer well enough for a meal about once in twelve months. This was the fifth consecutive repast of that kind of which Mr. Hicks had partaken. He was beginning to loathe the sight of bologna and pies with varnished tops.

At this psychologic moment Barbara appeared on the veranda and viewed his preparations with much more interest than she had previously shown in his movements.

VII

"BOLOGNA, Mr. Hicks! Again? How fond you must be of it!" In Barbara's tone was a very good imitation of surprise.

Hicks looked from Barbara to the hunk of bologna, and made a grimace.

"Fond of it!" he repeated. "There ain't much of anything I like less."

"I don't like it, either. We never have it. Now, what do you suppose we are going to have for dinner, Mr. Hicks?" Here Barbara spread out the fingers of her left hand and told off the items, one by one. "Broiled chicken, hot biscuit, strawberries and cream, and coffee."

The lips of Mr. Hicks performed a noiseless evolution at the naming of every item. Then his eyes sorrowfully sought the hunk of cold bologna.

"Say," he responded, "I ain't had a meal worth calling a meal since I've

been on this case, and I'm 'most starved."

"Are you, really? Why, what a shame!" You might have thought Barbara had discovered some hidden injustice. "Well, you shall have one now if you'll follow me into the kitchen."

It was all there, as she had promised. The chicken was a crisp, golden brown, the biscuits as light as this-tledown, the berries gleamed redly through the cream like—well, like nothing else in the world. As Mr. Hicks finished the last delicious spoonful and drained his second cup of coffee he sighed contentedly.

"I'm a good feeder, ma'am," he declared to Mary. "Allus was a good feeder, but that's one of the best meals I ever had. I want to say right here that you're a mighty good cook, and that Miss Barbara is a real lady."

That marked the surrender of Hicks. Before the week was through he had taken his place in Barbara's little working force. He fed and watered the horses, helped Peter to milk, chopped kindling wood, even peeled potatoes and scrubbed the kitchen floor for Mary. In some deft manner which Mr. Hicks himself could not have explained, his load of responsibility to the United States Government had been transferred to the graceful shoulders of "the real lady," but with no uncomfortable loss of dignity.

"I must consult with Mr. Hicks about that," Barbara would say in his presence whenever any question arose as to the technical rights of those who held possession of Cresthills. These consultations might seem, to any credulous onlooker unacquainted with Barbara's tactics, to be interesting exhibitions of hypnotic suggestion. First Barbara determined what she wished to do and then Mr. Hicks was led to define exactly that course. Thus it was that all the perishable products of the estate, from the fruits on the trees to the sheep in the fields, were laid under tribute.

"Possession is nine p'int of the law," Hicks would solemnly declare.

"If we don't own these things, who does?"

He had come to count himself, you see, not as an emissary of the enemy, but as a member of the garrison.

The subduing of Aunt Emily, however, was a different matter. Accustomed to regard the universe as an imperfectly designed scheme to minister to her special comforts and material needs, she was wholly out of harmony with the new order of things at Cresthills. It was Mrs. "Billy" who persuaded Aunt Emily to use a dustpan and broom, to make the beds and to rise in time for a seven-o'clock breakfast. Just how Mrs. "Billy" did it she never told, but Aunt Emily became a working unit, even though she sometimes did weep into the dustpan.

As for Mrs. "Billy" herself, while she went about her duties with a kind of mechanical willingness, she had neither enthusiasm nor interest. She accepted Barbara's plans without question, and made no suggestions of her own. Her hopes and ambitions had been put away, but she still brooded over them in secret. With mournful eyes she regarded the cheerfulness which came to Billy Redkirk as his work in field and garden began to strengthen his flabby muscles and put a healthy color in his cheeks. She shuddered when she saw him come in with shirt sleeves rolled up and his trousers tucked into the tops of riding-boots, which he had adopted for garden work. For a time she insisted that he dress for dinner every night, as usual, but at last he rebelled. He was too tired for such nonsense, he said. And Cheltingham didn't, so why need he? Billy, you see, was inclined to revert. Yet Mrs. "Billy" donned a dinner gown every night.

"I shall continue to wear them until they are all worn out," she declared to Barbara. "They ought to last for several years. I suppose I shall wear them after I get to the poorhouse."

Barbara could only laugh at this. She could not laugh, however, when her mother wept at sight of her daughter's berry-stained fingers. Absurd though

it seemed, her grief at that spectacle was genuine.

"Poor mother," said Barbara, putting an arm about her waist. "Don't worry about things. Perhaps they will all come out right some day. The stains will, at any rate, with a little lemon juice."

They were beginning to understand each other better in those days than ever before. The cold, calm, distant Barbara developed by degrees into a warm, loving Barbara who seemed very near. By tacit consent they never alluded to the past, never speculated as to the remote future. One brought too many regrets, the other was too vague.

Nor was Lawrence Cheltingham ever made the subject of discussion between them. Mrs. "Billy" had been puzzled when she first learned that he was to remain, and had expected to understand his motive by observing Barbara. As nothing which Barbara did or said offered explanation, Mrs. "Billy" concluded that Cheltingham had been moved by an exaggerated sense of loyalty to her husband, a loyalty which prevented him from leaving them while they were in trouble. She looked for him to tire of this and leave almost any day.

Barbara, too, was mystified. She studied the Englishman closely, wondering why he continued to stay and to work as he did. There was no longer any doubt as to his utility. Without his executive ability, his tireless energy and his keen enthusiasm for making Cresthills produce every dollar that was in the land, the Redkirk experiment would hardly have proved to be such a success.

Yet his motive was still unexplained. It was not a sentimental one; Barbara was sure of that. In the beginning she had been on her guard against this, for she did not intend to indulge in any foolish romance nor encourage futile dreams. She had made up her mind to check promptly any silliness that he might develop, even though the action deprived her of her most valuable assistant. But there was no occasion to

check anything. Cheltingham's attitude toward her was that of a good comrade, nothing more. He attempted no gallant speeches, gave her no flattering glances.

All of which should have been most satisfactory to Barbara. That it was not she would have vigorously denied. Yet, in her daily contact with Cheltingham she was conscious of a something that was lacking. It was neither respect nor deference. It was that unspoken, subtle tribute which every beautiful woman exacts from all men but which she affects to ignore.

Cheltingham had ceased to pay this tribute, either with tongue or eyes, and she knew that he could be eloquent with both. As a result, Barbara was piqued. In various ways she betrayed it, yet Cheltingham was apparently oblivious. He did not openly avoid her, but during his spare moments he seemed to prefer the society of her father and Mr. Hicks. Every evening after dinner the three men played billiards for an hour or more, and then Cheltingham would read or write letters until bedtime.

Along in August Mr. Cheltingham received a cablegram and several letters which seemed to convey important news. Once he was called to the city for a day, but he returned to resume his morning trips to the hotel, as though nothing had happened.

It was soon after this, however, that Barbara became conscious of a slight change in his manner toward her. Once or twice she discovered that he was looking at her in a fashion quite different from anything she had ever noticed before. Her first impulse was to return the look in a manner that would clearly indicate her disapproval. On second thought, however, Barbara concluded that this would be treating him ungratefully.

So, when she found him observing her, she merely dropped her long lashes and pretended not to have seen. After more deliberate reflection Barbara admitted to herself that it would be silly of her to resent such glances. They did no harm. She was not entirely

certain that she did not like them. Had they come from any other man, of course, she would have acted differently. But Mr. Cheltingham had proved himself to be so different from other men. She really owed him an apology for having so hastily misjudged him at first.

Barbara developed an interest in the books which Mr. Cheltingham was reading. She was delighted to learn that Meredith was his favorite novelist. They talked about Diana and Richard Feverel by the hour. She was amazed to find that he was reading "Captain Cook's Voyages" for the fifth time. They disagreed amiably as to Kipling. They talked of man in the abstract. Barbara quoted Miss Phoebe Allen. Cheltingham cited some sayings of Grandmother O'Rourke, who had been a noted flirt.

The after-dinner billiard game became two-handed.

Whether it had been a mere whim, a distinct motive or just an impulse which had prompted Cheltingham to cast his lot in with these folk at Crest-hills, his lingering there was now no mere perfunctory matter of loyalty. He was making the discovery that there were several Barbaras contained within this one regal young person, whose first appearance had been so dazzling.

Just how many Barbaras there were he could never be quite sure, but they were all charming. Even the haughty, autocratic Barbara whom he remembered as taking his measure with scornful glance, he was unwilling to forget. The sober Barbara, who took herself so seriously and demanded that you make the same valuation, she, too, he gladly admitted to the list. Then there were the gentle, sympathetic Barbara; the restless, fidgety Barbara, who might be expected to fly off at almost any tangent, and who was wholly illogical to the other Barbaras; as well as the pensive, thoughtful Barbara, who came at rare intervals, her presence suggesting that if one knew how, one might whisper comforting things in her ear. Also there was a whimsical Barbara, with a

rare appreciation for the humor of things; a Barbara who must be coaxed into being, caught unawares and enjoyed while the mood lasted.

All these Barbaras had Lawrence Cheltingham discovered where he had known but one. He was highly pleased with himself because he had done it. Never before had he realized that the merely feminine could be so charming. For, of course, it was nothing else. It was not simply that Barbara was beautiful. He had seen before faultless figures, flower-like faces and big, expressive eyes; had seen them appreciatively, just as he had seen fair landscapes, fine horses and wonderfully lighted Arctic skies.

But Barbara was Barbara, and there was none other like her. It was a privilege to be near her, to know her moods, to share some of her thoughts. To be awarded comradeship with Barbara was delicious. Mr. Cheltingham's gray-blue eyes no longer held any audacity in them when he looked at her.

And Barbara—Barbara found it necessary, one day, to ride to the village with Mr. Cheltingham. It was the whimsical Barbara. She insisted on being helped up on the driver's seat beside him.

"Did you think I would allow you to play coachman?" she demanded. "Besides, I've often wanted to ride up here. I have done a lot of things in the past few weeks that I had always thought would be nice to do."

Cheltingham chirruped to the cobs, and the carriage rounded the first curve on two wheels.

"Is the doing of them as nice as you thought it would be?"

"Yes—and no," said Barbara, bracing her feet firmly beside his. "This is even nicer. But then, you drive ever so much better than John did, and faster."

"You would recommend me, then, if I should want a situation? But some of the other things were not so much fun as you expected."

"They're not so interesting."

"For instance——?"

"Making out weekly bills and keeping accounts. It's tremendously monotonous, figuring so many dozen eggs at so much a dozen, so many quarts of milk at so much a quart."

"Worse than giving house-parties?"

"I would be willing to give one a week until Christmas. Do you know, I think I could appreciate seeing anybody now. That is one of the reasons why I wished to ride down to the village today. I'm hungry for the sight of folks. Just think, we have been practically isolated for so long! I can imagine how lighthouse-keepers and polar explorers must feel."

"But you have been living a very useful life, you know. We have been producing things, making two blades of grass grow, and all that. Think of the crates of berries, the bushels of peas and the gallons of milk we have furnished to those summer boarders at the hotel! Nothing vapid nor frivolous about that."

"No, nor inspiring, either. I suppose someone must do it, but I am convinced that it is not my sphere."

"I was convinced of that long ago," said Cheltingham.

She glanced up quickly, as if to read in his eyes more than the words conveyed, but he was watching the horses.

"It seems as if I did not fit in anywhere. I wonder," she said musingly, "where I really do belong?"

He made no reply to this, but in a moment he said, apparently forgetting her remark: "I've never told you, have I, about the place where my uncle lives—his country home, I mean?"

"No," said Barbara, a little perplexed.

"It's rather a noble old ramshackle, part castle, part modern. The castle was built by a savage old baron nearly three hundred years ago. It is on the side of a hill. There's a very pretty view from the turret. In the whole building there are a hundred and odd rooms. Some of those in the new part are quite fit to live in. I have some photographs of it in my trunk that I'd

like to show you some day. You mustn't let me bore you, though, telling about the place. You see, I lived there until I was fifteen, and I can never get over thinking that Kelvey Castle is the finest place in England, which it isn't, of course. But the nearest I ever get to being homesick is when I think of those old poplars, those big rooms and those old servants who poke about through them."

"Aren't you sorry that you quarreled with the earl?"

He just looked at her, steadily, earnestly, perhaps somewhat warmly, and shook his head. Barbara did not ask why he was not sorry. She simply dropped her lashes under his gaze.

VIII

How slowly the bud forms, yet how unexpectedly does it burst into bloom!

They were no more than a mile nearer the village, yet they were talking it over. For Cheltenham, wholly charmed by a fleeting vision of the pensive Barbara, reveling in the nearness of her lovely self, electrified by the touch of her shoulder against his, had suddenly reined in the cobs under the shade of a great elm that arched the highway, and there, in full view of some half-dozen haymakers just across the roadside fence, had impetuously declared that he loved her very much indeed. It was a most comprehensive declaration. The fire of it burned in his eyes, its energy shook the strong hand which he held toward her.

Like a resisting tree caught in a flood, Barbara was swayed by the very rush of it. For a moment she seemed to yield, and with his free arm he caught her fiercely to him. Her head nestled for an instant on his shoulder.

The haymakers stared. It was natural that they should.

But the spectacle was brief. With a sigh that was half a sob Barbara straightened, freed herself from his

impertinent arm, and panted protestingly:

"No, no, no! I—I am sorry—you had no right!"

"I took it, Barbara. It is the right of every man who loves. You do not doubt that I love you, do you, Barbara?"

"No, no! Only——"

"Then there is no reason under heaven why I should not tell you so—unless—unless—Barbara, you do not despise me, do you?"

She shook her head.

"That is sufficient. I am not bold enough to ask that you love me—yet. But I want you to. Oh, Barbara, you must! For I mean to win you, to carry you away, to hold you forever. I am ready to do it now. I saw a church back there, and a parsonage. Shall we drive back, Barbara?"

Again Barbara shook her head. She had turned away from him. Her shoulders rose and fell throbbingly with the storm of her emotions. It was very disturbing to listen to such impetuous words. Was this, then, the way men made love? It was surprising, bewildering. For Barbara had her own preconceived notions of love and love-making. At college she had studied and read about it in books. Miss Phoebe Allen had devoted a whole lecture to what she loftily styled "the primitive and elemental sentiment." While many of the young ladies had giggled all through the lecture, Barbara had drunk it in. She had then decided that the only manner in which a gentleman could make such crude sentiments pleasing to the ear of a refined woman would be by a courtly and dignified statement.

Mr. Cheltenham's method was anything but that. Yet Barbara was strangely thrilled. She had listened eagerly, the blood surging into her cheeks, all her nerves deliciously alert. And no sooner did she realize this than she bent her whole will toward the subduing of this shameful weakness. What would Miss Allen think of her!

The haymakers, seeing no further developments, grinned at one an-

other and returned to their work. There are always lovers, but second-crop clover must be cured while the sun shines.

"Please drive on," she said at length.

He did, but kept the horses in a walk.

"Barbara, when will you marry me?" he asked.

"I shall never marry you."

"I don't believe that. Why do you think you will not?"

She would make no reply to this.

"Is it because I am only a polo-playing Englishman? I've quit polo, and I'm half Irish, anyway. Besides, I am going to do some fine things in the world, just for you. Will you believe that, now?"

She smiled soberly in response.

"You don't hold it against me that my uncle is an earl?"

Her eyes told him that she did not.

"Or that silly talk you overheard in the dining-car?"

"Of course not!"

"Then why?" he insisted.

Barbara would not say. They drove on. As they entered the village he asked her once again why she thought that she would never marry him. She was watching some children at play and did not reply. As he helped her to alight before one of the shops he whispered the same question. When she came out he repeated it. When they called at the post-office for the mail he made the query once more.

"You're a goose," said Barbara.

"I love you," said Cheltingham.

"Will you tell the town about it?"

"Yes, if the town will listen. Do you love me at all, Barbara?"

"I—I don't know."

"When you find out will you tell me?"

"Certainly not. Now let us drive home."

On the way back he whistled to the horses. He cut off daisy-heads with the whip-lash. He looked at Barbara joyously, his face aglow. As they neared the elm he pulled the cobs to a walk.

"It was here, Barbara, that I told you. I shall never forget this spot. Some day I may erect a shrine here."

"The farmers would like a drinking-trough better."

"It shall be both. It is beautiful, Barbara, to think that you know, that I have told you."

At last, as the only way of getting him down from the clouds, Barbara stated her position firmly and plainly. As a prospective pauper she could not marry anyone. She could not even contemplate an escape from misfortune by such a course. Her own self-respect would not allow her to think of such a thing.

"But look at the risk I run!" exclaimed Cheltingham. "Why, you're liable to get all your money back again! Then see where I stand! But I don't stop for that. Fortune or no fortune, I want you."

Barbara sighed. "I wish you would be sensible."

"And I wish you would let me drive back to the parsonage."

"You must stop it," said Barbara firmly. "I shall never marry you."

"Once there was a Cheltingham who asked the lady of his choice every Saturday for a year before she finally said 'yes'; and she wasn't half as charming as you, Barbara. I know, because she was the lady of the second earl and her portrait hangs in the great hall at Kelvey."

"After the third Saturday she should have sent word that she was not in," suggested Barbara.

"She couldn't very well do that, you know, for she was in, and he knew it. He had locked her in and carried the key himself. If you will come with me to Kelvey I will show you the very rooms in the tower."

"No, thank you; I prefer to remain where I am not obliged to say 'no' every Saturday."

This modern Cheltingham either lacked the savage persistence of the second earl, or else he was wiser, for he drove the remainder of the way to Cresthills almost in silence.

Mrs. "Billy" was standing at an

open window as they drove up. Perhaps she sighed a little regretfully as she watched them. Something in the manner of Cheltingham as he helped Barbara to alight arrested her attention. Also, there was an odd look in Barbara's eyes as she came in to hand her some letters.

"Barbara," she asked, "did you enjoy your drive?"

"No—yes—that is, of course I did." The pink and white came and went in Barbara's cheeks in telltale fashion.

"Ah!" said Mrs. "Billy" quietly. "You did and you didn't. I understand."

"But you don't, mother, you can't."

"No? Let me explain: There were moments when you remembered other drives into the village under different conditions, drives when John was with us and Cresthills was all our own. Those moments you did not enjoy. But Mr. Cheltingham can be very entertaining when he is in the mood. I have no doubt that he helped you to forget—and then you did enjoy the drive. Come, Barbara, am I not right?"

Barbara shook her head. "I forgot only for a single moment."

"And what made you forget then, Barbara?"

Barbara hesitated. She had not meant to confide to her mother this new and disturbing experience. Her only impulse had been to hide it away from everyone, to shut it out even from her own thoughts. But instinct is strong. So out came the confession.

"It was when Mr. Cheltingham asked me to marry him."

"Barbara!" Mrs. "Billy" said it eagerly. She arose and held out her arms to her daughter.

But Barbara waved her away. "It was a very short moment, mother. Then I remembered that Cresthills was no longer ours, that nothing was ours."

"But it shall be yet, Barbara. I have not given up hope; I never shall."

"It is well enough to hope," said Barbara soberly. "I, too, hope that it will all come back to us some day. But every beggar hopes."

"And you told him——?"

"I told Mr. Cheltingham that I could not marry him to escape poverty."

"Did you, Barbara!" There was an unexpected ring in Mrs. "Billy's" tone. "You refused him, the nephew of an earl! Barbara, I—I think I am proud of you."

This time Barbara did not wave away the invitation of her mother's open arms. According to the conventional feminine code, tears were due. Barbara shed them. Mrs. "Billy" shed them. For several minutes they enjoyed a damp and perfectly lovely time together. At the end of it Barbara had discovered what it really meant to have a mother, while Mrs. "Billy" rejoiced in a daughter regained.

"I am sorry for poor Lawrence," said Mrs. "Billy" at length.

"And not at all for poor me?" asked Barbara.

"Do you, Barbara? Do you care for him in that way?"

"I—I think I could," was the half-whispered admission; "but he must never know."

"No," sighed Mrs. "Billy." "Poor fellow! He must never know."

IX.

ONE of those letters which Barbara had handed her mother carried a concealed thunderbolt, as letters sometimes do. Outwardly it was an innocent-appearing missive, the notepaper being that of a Boston hotel; but after Mrs. "Billy" had read it and re-read it she threw the sheet scornfully from her and stared very hard at nothing at all. Gradually there crept into Mrs. "Billy's" eyes a look of desperate determination.

The letter was from Mrs. Joseph Barnley, who, previous to becoming Mrs. Barnley, had successively been the wife and the widow of Mrs. "Billy's" only brother. Her home was not in Boston but in St. Louis. Here is what Mrs. "Billy's" quondam sister-in-law had to say:

DEAR EDITH: I suppose you will not mind my writing to you, now that you are no

longer such a *grande dame*. I shall not venture to offer my sympathy, although I did feel for you when I read that you had lost all your money. No, I think something more substantial than sympathy would be better appreciated from me. Joe had to come East on a business trip and brought me along. On our way back he is going to let me stop off long enough to see what we can do for you. I expect that by this time you must be near the point where even such humble folk as Joe and I might be of help to you. Now, do not let any false pride keep you from telling me just what you need. I will look around, see how you are situated, and then I will ask Joe to do something handsome. Expect me on the noon train, Thursday.

Yours as ever,

LIZZIE.

So Mrs. Joe Barnley was coming to Cresthills. She meant to "look around" and see just how they were situated, to see how the mighty were fallen. She was coming to dispense charity. You should have seen Mrs. "Billy's" chin as she made these reflections.

It was an old feud, running back to the days when Mrs. "Billy," newly come to the handling of the Redkirk millions, had politely but firmly declined a visit from her former sister-in-law. She had never liked Mrs. Barnley, the sharp-nosed, smooth-tongued, black-eyed woman who had so plainly shown her envy of every good fortune that had come to the mistress of Cresthills.

And now Mrs. Barnley intended to patronize her, to humble her with cheap gifts and cheaper sympathy. There was no avoiding her, either. She had not asked if she would be welcome. She meant to march in on them, just as the good women who do slum work march unbidden into the tenements of the poor. Possibly she expected to overwhelm them by leaving a fifty-dollar order at the grocer's. Or she might offer to send on some of her second-best dresses.

Mrs. "Billy" was reading the letter to Barbara and Aunt Emily when Billy Redkirk came in, breathless and agitated.

"More of our kind of luck, Edith," he announced. "Guess what's up now?"

"I couldn't," said Mrs. "Billy." "What is it?"

"The hotel has burned to the ground. I've just been watching the fire. There goes our market!"

"I suppose that means," said Barbara, "that we must eat our own green corn and peas. We've such a lot, too. We could never sell it all in the village."

"It means that we are about at the end of our rope, so far as money goes," declared Billy Redkirk.

"Then you will be delighted to know," said Mrs. "Billy," with grim sarcasm, "that we are about to be visited in our extremity by an angel in disguise. Mrs. Joe Barnley is coming tomorrow on a charitable mission."

"The angelic Lizzie!" Billy Redkirk groaned.

"Here is her most gracious announcement," and Mrs. "Billy" tossed him the letter.

"Oh, Lord!" exclaimed Billy as he read the missive. "Can't we stave her off? What do you mean to do, Edith?"

"I am just planning her reception," said Mrs. "Billy" quietly.

Billy Redkirk looked at his wife curiously. When Edith talked like that she meant something. She was aroused at last. Energetically she took up the business. Of Barbara she asked just how much money remained in the family treasury.

"There's nearly two hundred dollars," said Barbara wonderingly.

"I want it," said Mrs. "Billy" promptly. Then she went to Cheltenham.

"Mr. Cheltenham, I suppose a great many persons over at the hotel are without shelter and don't know where to go," she suggested.

"Undoubtedly," said Cheltenham.

"I have decided to offer some of them the hospitality of Cresthills until they can make other arrangements," said Mrs. "Billy." "Would you mind driving over and bringing back a dozen or more? Please select a good-looking, agreeable lot. And while you are there, will you not engage half a

dozen maids? I shall want them only for a day or so, but they ought to be glad to go anywhere. Perhaps you had better have Peter take the other team for the maids. Do you think you can do all that?"

Cheltingham appeared slightly bewildered, but he assented and started at once on his errand.

"Mother, what does all this mean?" demanded Barbara.

Mrs. "Billy" smiled confidently. "Folly, my dear Barbara, nothing but sheer folly. Wait and see."

Then she went to the telephone and called up several village stores, giving some lavish orders.

"But, mother," protested Barbara, "we can't afford to buy such things now."

"I know it, Barbara. But tomorrow we are to entertain Mrs. Joseph Barnley. I should like to do it well."

Then Barbara understood.

"But what will Mr. Cheltingham think of us?"

"I don't know," said Mrs. "Billy." "I shall tell him my plan when he returns. I only hope he will bring us a good-looking lot of guests."

He did. There were fifteen of them, mainly disconsolate women whose trunks were ashes and whose husbands had scurried cityward to ransack homes for other apparel. But they were agreeable persons, and very grateful to Mrs. "Billy" for her thoughtful generosity. Also, as the fire had broken out late in the afternoon, when most of them had been attending a euchre in the big parlors, they were wearing their best gowns. Altogether they made a very presentable company.

Peter arrived soon after with six neat but still frightened maids. Mrs. "Billy" took them in hand, and soon had them busily engaged in putting the guest-chambers to rights. Once more Cresthills hummed with activity.

Billy Redkirk moved about as one in a daze. Aunt Emily, on the contrary, revived wonderfully. She did not know what it was all about. She merely understood that the big house,

which had seemed so vacantly lonesome, was again filled with guests and servants. So she rejoiced. She listened contentedly as three different versions of the burning of the hotel were poured into her ears at the same time by as many agitated women.

Late in the evening, when the last grateful guest had retired, there was held a family council.

"What do you think of them?" demanded Cheltingham.

"Splendid," said Mrs. "Billy." "How did you manage to pick out such nice people?"

"It was easy enough. I found the manager, and told him that you wished to be of some assistance to his unfortunate guests. Then, in a casual sort of way, I suggested that as we could accommodate only a few we might as well have the most congenial ones. He was delighted. He said, of course, we should have the cream of the lot. So I sat on a rescued water-cooler, and he brought them around. They were delighted, too. They said some very nice things about you on the way over. Yes, they do seem to be nice folks. Very presentable, too, except for a lack of headgear. There isn't a hat in the crowd. But they'll have millinery enough by tomorrow, judging from the instructions they gave their husbands before they left; and when they get their hats they'll all start for home."

"But they mustn't leave until afternoon. We must arrange that in some way," said Mrs. "Billy" decidedly.

"Oh!" said Cheltingham. "I didn't understand your program."

Then she told him of the threatened visitation from Mrs. Barnley and her unwelcome charitable intentions.

"Of course," said Mrs. "Billy," "I am very foolish. I am spending almost all the money there is left. But I don't care. If Mrs. Barnley chooses to come here to inspect our poverty, let her come."

"Bully for you, Mrs. Redkirk!" exclaimed Cheltingham. "You may count on me!"

So, when the messenger of charity

arrived on the noon train, she was astonished to see the supposed object of philanthropy sitting in the Redkirk brougham behind the dancing Redkirk cobs, an extremely smart-looking coachman on the driver's seat.

"It's so good of you, Lizzie," murmured Mrs. "Billy" as she extended a welcoming hand to the black-eyed Mrs. Barnley.

"Then you haven't lost your carriage and horses yet?" was Mrs. Barnley's first comment.

"Lost them!" Mrs. "Billy's" fine eyebrows lifted inquiringly. Then, as if suddenly recalling something, "Ah! I see. Your letter—you have been reading those horrid, sensational newspapers, haven't you, my dear? They do exaggerate scandalously."

"Edith, do you mean to say it isn't so?" Mrs. Barnley stiffened against the broadcloth cushions. On her sharp features was a look of dismay and alarm.

Mrs. "Billy" favored her with an amused smile. "How comforting it is to be assured of such sympathy as yours, my dear, even though one isn't in actual need of it."

"But it *is* so, isn't it?" insisted Mrs. Barnley. "You have lost your fortune, haven't you, Edith?"

Mrs. "Billy" laughed easily. "It is really too bad that you should be so disturbed over the matter, Lizzie. Newspapers should not be allowed to print such things. Of course, there has been more or less fuss in the courts and all that, but—well, we are still at Cresthills, you see. And you must stay over for luncheon with us and tell me about your dear Joe. Is he still connected with that odious hog-killing establishment?"

Mrs. Barnley did not tell her about Joe. Her black eyes were searching Mrs. "Billy" for indications of poverty and want. They were hardly in evidence, for Mrs. "Billy" was attired in that same regal costume of silk and lace in which she had received the Thayer-Braytons and the other distinguished members of that ill-starred house-party two months before.

"It is really a shame that you cannot stay over for a day or two," said Mrs. "Billy" as they neared Cresthills, "but there's such a crowd here now that I'm afraid I shouldn't know where to put you. They are charming people. You must meet them."

"Guests, too!" Mrs. Barnley almost shrieked her astonishment. Had she not been so intent on gazing at Mrs. "Billy" she might have noted that the shoulders of the smart-looking coachman were shaking in a most unprofessional manner. "Do you mean to say, Edith, that you have the house full of guests?"

"Only fourteen or fifteen, my dear. Cresthills is such a mere box of a place, you know," said Mrs. "Billy" depreciatively.

And at that moment, as they swung around the curving driveway, the big mansion came into view. Perhaps it did look impressive in the eyes of Mrs. Barnley, for from that point it loomed larger and more imposing than from any other. Certainly there was no lack of life about the place. Scattered over the wide lawns were several groups of persons. The striped marquee had once more been pressed into service. Games were in progress. Neat maids were in evidence. From the veranda came the buzz of gay chatter. To all intents it was a gala scene, quite as good to look upon as that former affair to which Mrs. Barnley had not been bidden.

Barbara had carried out her share of the program to the letter. She was making these hatless, houseless, trunkless people forget for the moment the tragedy of yesterday. It had been an easy task and a pleasant one. From the billiard-room came the click of balls and the voices of men. Billy Redkirk had needed no prompting to do his share.

Mrs. Barnley's wide eyes took it all in. Then she turned to Mrs. "Billy" with an awed look.

"Edith," she asked chokingly, "what—what did you think when you read my letter?"

"Oh, I quite understood. You see,

Lizzie, I have known you for a long time. But come, here we are. I must leave you with Barbara until luncheon is served."

When Mrs. Barnley beheld Barbara she suffered another shock. She had not seen her since Barbara was a ten-year-old miss with a dolly and a maid. Today Barbara was wearing one of those pastel gowns and looking as though she had just strayed from a Watteau print.

At luncheon the guests were radiant and in high spirits. Why not? Even the best appointed summer hotel can hardly offer the attractions of such a place as Cresthills. Possibly they were somewhat at a loss to understand why the charming Mrs. Redkirk should entertain them in such lavish manner. For nothing had been spared. The great round dining-table was brave with cut-glass and snowy damask and glittering silver and dainty china. There was a profusion of cut flowers. There were four kinds of wine.

They were adaptable folk, these persons from the burned hotel. They chattered brilliantly of art and literature and music and the doings of society. Their attitude toward Mrs. Redkirk was one of subtle deference, which was the acme of polite flattery.

"What an admirable hostess she is!" said a distinguished-appearing woman in an aside to Mrs. Barnley.

"Isn't she!" responded Mrs. Barnley faintly. She had become thoroughly subdued, cowed into silence by the glamour with which she found Mrs. "Billy" surrounded. She wondered if these ladies were all wives of multimillionaires, if they were all social celebrities. One of them mentioned a duke. Mrs. Barnley held her breath. What if they should discover that she was from St. Louis and that her husband was connected with pork-packing!

When the ordeal was over she retreated to a quiet corner and consulted a time-table. There was a train to the city in half an hour.

"Must you go?" asked Mrs. "Billy."
"It was charming of you to come and— and look around, you know. And don't

forget to ask dear Joe to do something handsome, will you?"

As the Redkirk cobs whirled her to the station, one bitter reflection kept Mrs. Barnley company. It concerned the traveling-gown which she was wearing. She had thought it rather fetching when she put it on in St. Louis. But how had Mrs. "Billy's" elegant guests regarded it?

"They must have thought me a fright," was her conclusion. It was not a consoling thought. She even fancied that she detected a grin on the face of the aristocratic coachman as he drove away.

Perhaps Mrs. Barnley would have felt better if she could have heard the remark of Billy Redkirk on the following day. Cresthills was again without guests. The husbands had come, with hats and suit-cases, and had departed with profuse thanks. Also the maids had been sent away.

"What are we to do now?" demanded Billy Redkirk of his wife.

X

THE crisis in the Redkirks' affairs had indeed reached an acute stage. There was no denying that. The market-gardening makeshift had come to an inglorious end. It was now late in August, but it would be weeks before the courts would even begin to take up, in their own leisurely way, the accumulated gist of business. It would be months, possibly years, before the case of Redkirk vs. Redkirk could be brought to trial. And in the meantime—what?

"I never before realized," commented Mrs. "Billy" bitterly, "that one could be starved by legal process."

"The law seems to be quite equal to that," observed Cheltingham. He, too, was discouraged. For the third time that day Barbara had refused to listen to him.

"If I were a man," declared Mrs. "Billy," "I would do something."

Billy Redkirk winced. "But what is there to do, my dear?" he protested.

"First of all, I would go up and see what those lawyers are about. I don't believe they are doing anything. What is it to them whether we starve or not? They don't care. But I would make them care!"

"If I knew anything about law, perhaps I could tell them what they ought to do," began Billy.

"I could," said his wife. "Why don't they find out who this Cuddy-back person is and where she got that will? Why don't they look her up and prove that she is a forger, and send her to prison?"

"I think I agree with you, Mrs. Redkirk," assented Cheltingham, who for the first time was taking a lively interest in the will case. "They should investigate that woman's record, it seems to me. I'll tell you what! I have some business of my own to attend to in town; suppose I drop in and see your lawyers and try to prod them up?"

Mrs. "Billy" gave him a grateful look. Even Barbara smiled approvingly. Then and there it was arranged that Cheltingham should, as he put it, "go on a scouting expedition into the camp of the enemy." How literally he was to do this he did not then conceive. Mrs. "Billy" sat down at once to prepare a letter of introduction to Trent & Packham.

Before starting in the morning Cheltingham contrived to have a talk with Barbara. He had found her coming from the garden with a big bunch of sweet peas. Some of the flowers were pink and white, and they were gemmed with morning dew, but to Cheltingham they seemed not half so fresh and lovely as the cheeks against which they were held.

"I suppose you will at least wish me good luck," he said.

"Why shouldn't I?" asked Barbara.

"But you haven't much faith that I will do anything worth while, have you?"

Barbara shook her head.

"There's no telling," he went on. "I may, after all. I have had some

good luck myself, of late, that I've been wanting to tell you about. It's a legacy, quite a nice sum. And there's something more. The earl wants me to come back to Kelvey Castle. Barbara, I wish you would come, too."

"I know," said Barbara, a little wistfully. "But please do not ask me again. When do you go?"

"Whenever you will go with me, Barbara."

She turned from him, a troubled look in her eyes.

"Don't," she whispered pleadingly.

"Then I must go and straighten out this will case at once. I shall stir up those lawyers if I have to shake them until their teeth rattle. I shall see the judges and scold them for not holding court in the summer. I shall ask them if they're not ashamed of themselves. And then, when I have done all the grand and noble things I can think of, when I come back to you with your fortune in one hand and my heart in the other, will you say yes?"

Barbara told him that he was absurd, but she pinned a spray of pink flowers on his coat and looked earnestly into his gray-blue eyes alight with whimsical humor.

"Tell me," she said soberly, "would you have asked me this if—if nothing had happened, if things were just as you found them when you first came to Cresthills?"

"If I had known you as I have learned to know you now, Barbara, I should have wished to."

"But would you?" she insisted.

"It would have been merely a question of courage. Your millions frightened me, you know. In spite of all our bold, bad jesting on that subject, I suspect that neither Tivvy Winthrop nor I would ever care to be classed as fortune-hunters. We have tender consciences, Tivvy and I. But the blessed courts have made me bolder, haven't they? So why not let the millions go and take me instead? It's a poor bargain for you, I admit, but see what a lucky dog it makes of me!"

Barbara made a gesture of despair. "When you go back to your uncle, the earl, he may ask you about those uncouth Americans. You must tell him that some of them are very, very rich and tremendously haughty; also that some of them are very, very poor, and quite as proud as they are poor. Will you?"

"I shall tell him nothing of the kind. I shall say to the earl, 'Well, I've come back. I've been robbing America. Here's my loot.' Then I'll present you, Barbara."

"It will not be I."

"And why not?"

"Because by that time I shall be an assistant instructor of ancient history and higher mathematics at my old college. I have written to know if there was a place for me and they have offered me this. In two or three years I shall be wearing spectacles and contracting class-room nerves. I shall take a six-room cottage on a side street. Mother will keep house, Aunt Emily will probably go to live with an old housekeeper with whom she was always very friendly, and father will plant a garden for us and bring in the coal and wood. I have my future all planned, you see, and it does not include a visit to Kelvey Castle."

"Barbara, you are not in earnest about this, are you?" He tried to capture one of her hands, but she warded him off with the sweet peas.

"Oh, yes, I am," she declared.

"Then you have given up the ship—Cresthills, the fortune, and all that?"

"All. But I have not told mother. Let her hope while she may. And you must not trouble yourself with our sorry affairs any more, Mr. Cheltingham. You can do nothing, of course. The court has decided that the estate belongs to someone else. We must submit as gracefully as we can. I have been talking with Mr. Hicks about it, and Mr. Hicks, you know, has had a great deal of experience in courts."

"Hicks is an old croaker," growled Cheltingham.

"No, he is not. Mr. Hicks feels very badly about it. But he has seen a

great many similar cases tried in court and he says the wrong persons always get the property."

There was no combating such wisdom as this. Cheltingham regretted that he had not choked Hicks.

"Hicks," he said, with caustic emphasis, "is a wonder."

Barbara laughed at his vehemence. "Mr. Hicks is getting the horses ready to take you to the station," she responded.

"Barbara, will you drive down with us to see me off?" he suddenly asked.

"I—I think perhaps I had better not."

"Then will you give me a glove, or a handkerchief, or—or one of your apron strings? I am your knight, you know. I am going out to do battle with fierce lawyers, with the mighty monster of the law, with heaven knows what. I need a token to wear on my shield."

"You shall have another sweet-pea blossom," said Barbara.

He bore it away with him, waving it in mock solemnity as he departed. He might have carried it all the way to town had he not dropped it on the car seat while he lighted a cigar, and forgotten to pick it up again. But a certain wistful tenderness in Barbara's wonderful eyes he did not forget.

XI

ONCE in town Mr. Lawrence Cheltingham seemed to acquire a new personality. For a young man who had spent the summer with such apparent disregard of time and his own affairs, he suddenly became a very busy person and one of no small importance.

His first visit was to a bank, where he was smilingly received in a private office by a white-mustached official. Next he went to an ornate new hotel and installed himself quite luxuriously in an outside suite. At a fashionable tailoring establishment they bowed him an obsequious welcome and announced that his order had been given prompt attention. They arrayed him faultlessly. You might have noted

that the left sleeve of his topcoat bore a band of black cloth. He dined at an exclusive club and answered a cablegram which he found awaiting him.

If any of the guests from that unfortunate hotel remembered the frank-eyed young man, of the reddish hair and the infectious smile, who drove over every morning from Cresthills with delicious vegetables and creamy milk, it is doubtful that they would have identified him as the same individual who bowed down Fifth avenue in a hansom-cab and was finally deposited at the entrance to the downtown skyscraper wherein Messrs. Trent & Packham conducted their extensive law business. Certainly Mr. Trent did not suspect that his visitor had so recently handled milk-cans and green corn, for Mr. Trent greeted him with deferential courtesy. He declared that he was charmed to meet Mr. Cheltingham, that the note of introduction from Mr. Cheltingham's London solicitors had been received, and that the services of Trent & Packham were at his immediate disposal.

Mr. Cheltingham did not seem overwhelmed by this urbanity. He betrayed no surprise. There was just a twinkle of appreciation in his calm, audacious eyes.

"I've been commissioned by one of your clients, Mr. Trent, to haul you over the coals," observed Cheltingham drily. "The Redkirks, you know," and he presented Mrs. "Billy's" letter.

The urbanity of Mr. Trent's manner cooled perceptibly. He adjusted his eyeglasses, however, and read the letter.

"Well?" he said expectantly. "Fire away." He was a heavy, full-blooded man, one of those big, round-faced men whose freedom from indigestion gains them undeserved credit for good nature.

"We would like to know what has been done toward settling the case," said Cheltingham.

Mr. Trent smiled indulgently. He took off his eyeglasses and balanced

them on his forefinger, whirling them with gentle dexterity.

"We have asked for an appeal. The argument on that will be heard some time next month. If the appeal is granted we shall endeavor to have the case placed on the calendar in time for the next term. That," continued Mr. Trent placidly, "is the best we can do at present; at least, we so regard it. What would your friends suggest?"

"Don't you think it would be a good plan to look up this Mrs. Cuddyback-Redkirk? Who is she, anyway? How did she happen to have a will signed by old Jeremiah Redkirk? Did he actually sign it? If he didn't, who did? Where did Mrs. Cuddyback come from, and—and so on?" Cheltingham waved his stick vaguely.

Again Mr. Trent smiled, a smile of undisturbed self-satisfaction.

"We should be extremely obliged, Mr. Cheltingham, to anyone who would give us exact information on those very points. During the three years that the alleged Mrs. Jeremiah Redkirk has played the role of plaintiff in this interesting action we have endeavored to solve those problems without much success. We suspect that she has a past, perhaps a very highly colored past, but she seems to have shut the door upon it and thrown away the key. Also, we suspect that she is an impostor, most likely a forger. But"—here Mr. Trent gave the eyeglasses an extra twirl of emphasis—"suspicion is not evidence. Mrs. Cuddyback-Redkirk chooses to obscure her past in mystery. We are unable to trace either her origin or her progress. We have employed detectives, who failed to detect. We have advertised for relatives of the late Mr. Cuddyback. They have not appeared. But here is the lady herself. She says she is the widow, not only of Cuddyback, but more recently of Jeremiah Redkirk. She produces a marriage certificate, signed by a minister who has been dead for several years, and by a witness who cannot be found. She produces a will bearing

a convincing signature. The court renders a decision in her favor. And there you are!"

Had the affair related to Larry Cheltingham's personal fortunes he might have been satisfied with this. But now the British half of him was thoroughly aroused. The obstinacy which had caused him to leave the old earl, the tenacity of purpose which had almost starved him in Alaska and had made him the best forward of England's crack polo team, now led him to grin a stubborn response to Mr. Trent's deceptive smile.

Quite enthusiastically he proceeded to suggest several impossible and wholly impractical lines of activity. Why not kidnap the woman and frighten her into confessing forgery, perjury and other crimes? Could not the President be asked to interfere? Had they tried hypnotism on her? Had they tried appealing to her sense of justice?

"Why, do you know," he went on, "it's a confounded outrage! Think of it! There are the Redkirks—charming persons, most of them—accustomed to all the luxuries and refinements of wealth. And see what happens. An unknown woman bobs up, a common adventuress, and at one stroke robs them of everything. And this remarkable law system of yours says it is all right. It is a rank injustice, Mr. Trent. Do you realize what it means to such persons as the Redkirks to be deprived of their income in this fashion? How do you imagine they have been existing this summer?"

Mr. Trent had formed no theory as to this.

"By marketing vegetables and fruits and milk!" exclaimed Cheltingham dramatically.

"Very distressing," observed Mr. Trent calmly.

"But there must be some way of restoring their property to them. They can't go on in this way, you know. What are they to live on while the courts are getting ready to act?"

"The machinery of the law, Mr. Cheltingham, is notoriously slow to move. It is like the mills of the gods.

But we cannot change it." Here he plucked a sheaf of documents from a pigeonhole before him. "Sometimes the delay works injury to our clients, sometimes they profit, and—er—when there are any new developments in the case we—er—will send word."

The interview seemed to be at an end. Mr. Trent smiled an affable farewell as his visitor went out.

As Cheltingham climbed into his cab he felt very much like a knight who has broken a lance against a stone wall. Yet he could still chuckle a little at himself. He had cut rather a poor figure in the eyes of the great lawyer, and he knew it. But he had no regrets, no smarting vanity. In the course of his ride uptown he evolved another project. He was just considering its brilliancy when he caught sight of someone signaling excitedly at him from the sidewalk. It was Tivvy Winthrop, with a good deal to say and very little breath for the saying of it.

"Hang you, Larry," he panted, bolting into the hansom from the curb as the driver pulled up, "haven't you any eyes or ears! Been chasing you for a block, shouting like a huckster and making a holy show of myself, while you've been sitting here like a grinning idiot."

"It's you, is it, Tivvy? I thought I was being cheered by the populace. And what does the illustrious Tivvy think he is doing so far from home and mother?"

"What are *you* doing here? That's what I want to know. I supposed you were back at Kelvey long ago, rolling in clover and playing the grand."

"You've heard, then?"

"I haven't been in the woods. But where have you been and what have you been doing?"

"Tivvy," said Cheltingham solemnly, "you'd never believe the half of it, so I'll not tell you. I'll say this much, though; the law of this great Republic, where one man is just as good as another and a little better, the law and I are at odds. Just now the law has a shade the best of it."

"The deuce! You're not under bail, are you?"

"No, my dear Tivvy. It's the civil, not the criminal code, which is bothering me. I have been vicariously robbed. The case is very complex. If I should explain it would make your head ache."

Mr. Winthrop shrugged his shoulders impatiently. "Drop it, Larry! You know I never understand your beastly jokes. What's up?"

Cheltingham threw him an injured look. "Joke! It's nearer high tragedy. But come along with me and I'll show you a sample. I am now on my way to the residence of a person to whom I am indebted for much happiness and much grief. Let me see." Here he consulted an address-book and, lifting the roof-trap with his walking-stick, gave the driver a number. "That is where she lives, Tivvy," he added.

"You're in love, then?" continued Mr. Winthrop cynically.

Cheltingham sighed and regarded his cigar with sentimental gaze.

"See here," broke forth Tivvy, "you don't mean to drag me around with you on a spooning expedition, do you? Just leave me out of that, Larry, if it's all the same to you."

"Can't do it, my dear fellow. This is a very trying hour for me. I need your moral support, your tender sympathy. I may want to use you as a buffer, too. And here's the place."

The cabman had stopped before a house which was in no way different from its neighbors in the block save that the window boards, which proclaimed the summer abandonment of others, had been removed.

"Come along, Tivvy," said Cheltingham as he jumped out.

"But—but I don't know the lady."

"Unhappy youth! But now is the accepted time. Here, give me one of your cards."

Reluctantly Mr. Winthrop followed him up the brownstone steps. Un-easily he endured the long wait after the bell-button had been pushed,

Cheltingham's hand resting detainingly on his sleeve. Finally they heard the inner vestibule door unlocked, and then the outer one was opened about four inches, the length of the guard-chain with which it was fitted. A scowling maid inspected them with suspicious eyes.

"For Mrs. Cuddyback," said Cheltingham, handing their cards through the crack. After a moment of hesitation the maid disappeared.

"A widow!" exclaimed Winthrop under his breath.

"Why not?" demanded Cheltingham.

"Cuddyback? Cuddyback?" Mr. Winthrop whispered the name interrogatively.

"Romantic name, isn't it?"

Before Mr. Winthrop could answer, the door was once more opened on the guard-chain, and they were conscious that from the gloom within they were undergoing another scrutiny. It was not what might be termed a cordial reception, but after a moment more they were asked to step in. Tivvy Winthrop was perplexed and mystified, but Cheltingham seemed not at all disturbed.

If Mr. Winthrop had formed any clear notion as to why his friend should select the unconventional hour of high noon for making an Avenue call it was quickly dispelled. One glance at the stout, middle-aged person in the untidy purple dressing-gown was quite sufficient to tell him that his first conclusion was wrong—or else Larry had completely lost his senses. Doubtless she had been attractive once, but never had she been the kind of woman who would have interested Larry Cheltingham.

She was half reclining in a big, leather-covered library chair. On a mahogany tabourette at her elbow were glasses, a siphon of soda, a decanter, cigarettes and a paper-covered "Ouida" novel. Her method of enjoying August in town was obvious, and she was at no pains to conceal it. She was examining their cards.

"Well, what is it?" she asked

promptly, looking from one to the other with impassive self-possession.

Cheltingham bowed suavely to indicate himself as spokesman.

"My friend, Mr. Winthrop," he began, "has the misfortune to have suffered the loss of speech and hearing. He is a deaf-mute." Here he paused to glance with melancholy solicitude at Tivvy. Mr. Winthrop gasped and turned pink to his ear-tips. "He has asked me, madam," continued Cheltingham brazenly, "to explain the object of his visit. I trust we do not intrude?"

"You'd better sit down," responded the stout person calmly, indicating some linen-draped chairs, but not committing herself to a formal welcome. "Now you can go ahead."

Mr. Winthrop studied the inside of his hat and meditated revenge. Cheltingham rested his stick across his knees and leaned comfortably back as if thoroughly at ease. So he was, for the moment. He experienced the creative thrill of the artist, the exhilaration of the bold skater who skims recklessly across thin ice. He had seized the inspiration of the instant and was plunging blindly ahead.

"I presume," he went on, "that you have heard the late Mr. Cuddyback mention Mr. Winthrop's name."

"Well?" She was an extremely non-communicative person.

"But even if you did, you may have forgotten. Mr. Cuddyback, I understand, has been deceased for—for—is it eight or ten years?"

"Suppose you call it ten," she suggested.

"Ah, of course! Ten, to be sure. And you were living then in—in—" Cheltingham seemed to be trying to spur his memory by rolling his cane back and forth over his knees. He made another start. "Let's see, you were living then—"

"Yes, I was living then. Go on." She seemed to be extracting a certain alert satisfaction from the situation.

"It's of no consequence, of course," admitted Cheltingham, "where you were living. The point is this—Mr.

Winthrop became acquainted with the late Mr. Cuddyback through their business relations and——"

"Did he?" Mrs. Cuddyback seemed interested. "What kind of business?" she demanded.

"Why—er—well, I don't think Mr. Winthrop ever mentioned it. But it doesn't matter. He——"

"Ask him now," said Mrs. Cuddyback peremptorily.

Cheltingham hesitated not a moment. On the back of an envelope he scribbled: "Think of something, Tivvy. Think hard," and passed it to his mute friend. In a moment Tivvy handed back the envelope. He had inscribed this helpful sentiment: "Go to the devil."

Cheltingham beamed and brightened. "Ah, yes! My friend was selling a subscription-edition of Dante's 'Inferno.' He was a book-agent."

"It's a pity all book-agents were not deaf and dumb," said Mrs. Cuddyback grimly.

"But he wasn't then," hastily corrected Cheltingham. "That came afterward—from a fever. A sad case, madam, for he is rather a bright young man, in spite of his appearance. He does not sell books now, of course. He has lately inherited a fortune from a favorite aunt. And that brings me to my point. Now, it is a whim of Mr. Winthrop to place flowers on the graves of all his departed friends. It almost amounts to a passion with him. Mr. Cuddyback was one of his friends. He did him a very good turn once; I've forgotten just what it was, but Winthrop hasn't. He says he shall never feel quite satisfied until he has paid this tender tribute to the memory of your late husband. He fairly dragged me here and insisted that I beg your permission for him to do this. So I came."

Cheltingham folded his arms triumphantly, smiling blandly on the stout person in the purple dressing-gown, and waited for an outpouring of detailed confidences concerning the late Cuddyback.

Mrs. Cuddyback smiled, too, but not

confidingly. She surveyed Cheltingham with an amused air. She swept Tivvy with a critical glance. Then she yawned and picked up her "Ouida."

"All right," she observed. "You tell your friend that he's welcome to put as many flowers as he wants to on Cuddyback's grave."

"Ah, but don't you see, Mrs. Cuddyback, he doesn't know where the grave is!"

"Don't he? Well, neither do I." Then she looked Cheltingham squarely in the eyes and grinned.

Cheltingham led the retreat. It was panicky, almost a rout, for the inspiration had petered out. As they got into the cab he saw a grimacing maid leering after them.

"Tivvy," said Cheltingham earnestly, "as an amateur detective, I'm a failure."

"You're an ass," said Mr. Winthrop feelingly.

"That's mere prejudice of yours. You know we never could agree on that subject. But I'll forgive you this once, since I am so deeply in your debt."

But Mr. Winthrop was indignant. "Deaf and dumb book-agent!" he snorted. "Flowers on graves! By thunder, Cheltingham, that's carrying the thing too far!"

"I know it, Tivvy," cheerfully assented Cheltingham. "I owe you an apology, an explanation and a luncheon. Which will you have first?"

The luncheon appealed to Mr. Winthrop, so they drove to a club. The explanation lasted through the coffee. It explained everything save Barbara, whose name was somehow omitted. Hence Tivvy shook his head and failed to understand why Cheltingham should take such a deep interest in the Redkirk misfortunes.

"It—it isn't quite dignified, you know, Larry," he protested, "getting mixed up with such persons as that Cuddyback woman."

"You're right," admitted Cheltingham. "Neither is there much dignity in a hot scrimmage for a goal; and that is what I've started out to do for the Redkirks—make a goal."

"Your drive seems to have been blocked."

"You've stated the case, Tivvy. But the game isn't over."

Mr. Winthrop smiled at the familiar slogan. How often had he heard it on the side lines of a polo field between periods! That was Larry all over. He was never beaten until after the last stroke, and he would play a scrub match with the same ginger that he put into an international trophy tournament.

After luncheon Winthrop decoyed him to a steamship office. Tivvy was engaging a passage home.

"Better book one for yourself, Larry. They'll let you have it if you pay in advance," he suggested.

"Shut up," growled Cheltingham, for the home-hunger was awakening within him.

They drove aimlessly for an hour, smoking in sociable silence and watching the people. A jeweler's window, glittering with costly trinkets, caught Cheltingham's eye.

"Let's go in and buy things," he said impetuously. Almost before Tivvy knew it a salesman was spreading rings and necklaces on a velvet pad for their inspection.

"Something for the Widow Cuddyback, eh?" asked Tivvy maliciously.

"Blessed if I know," said Cheltingham. "But I'm going to buy, anyway. I'll begin with you. Will you have cuff-buttons, or a gold cigarette-case, or silver-mounted brushes?"

"I'll chuck 'em at your head if you do," retorted Mr. Winthrop.

"But I've a disgraceful balance at the bank, Tivvy."

"It's no affair of mine."

"You're an unfeeling brute, Tivvy. Look at that sunburst there. Think of the fun it would be to give that to someone. And there isn't a woman in the world to whom I'd dare offer it. Tivvy, I'm bound to give somebody something. I must. Haven't you an idea in your head? Don't you know some undeserving chap who would be tickled to death to present that thing to his best girl?"

The salesman smiled discreetly.

"There's a porter at my hotel who might do," said Mr. Winthrop reflectively. "I caught him walking off with my best umbrella the other day, and he confessed that he only meant to give it to Miss Maggie Ryan, a fascinating chambermaid on the fifth floor. He's a lovelorn villain. Is that the kind you're looking for?"

"Lovely!" exclaimed Cheltingham. "Maggie gets the sunburst."

He would have bought it, too, had not Tivvy firmly declined to be party to such idiocy. So they compromised on a flashy ring, set with a big, off-color turquoise and pearls.

"It isn't exactly what I would like to do, but it makes me feel a little better," said Cheltingham as he dropped his friend at a hotel entrance. "Tell your porter it's an offering laid on the shrine of unrequited love."

"I'm beginning to believe you, Larry. If it would be any relief you may come in and tell me about her. I can stand half an hour of it, old man."

"It's kind of you, Tivvy, but I haven't the right to say a word. So long! I'll look you up again tomorrow."

He failed to do so, however. He spent the entire evening in the composition of a letter which was never finished and never sent. It was meant for Barbara. In the morning he started for Cresthills.

XII

"THE Ivinges are at Bar Harbor again," announced Mrs. "Billy" from behind the pages of a newspaper. "They gave a dinner in honor of the French ambassador last week, which means that they are planning on Washington this winter, I suppose. And I see that the *Lady Gray* is reported at Cannes. That's the Dickinsons' yacht, you know, Emily. I wonder who they have with them this summer. The Thayer-Braytons are to spend September in Scotland. Now who can have asked them to Scotland?"

Aunt Emily made no response. In spite of the well-intentioned little breeze which wandered up from the Sound to flutter the yellow and white awnings, the noonday atmosphere of the Cresthills drawing-room was conducive to nap-taking. Aunt Emily was thus engaged.

Mrs. "Billy," however, was too deeply absorbed to notice that her audience was no longer attentive.

"Mrs. Brockley," she continued, "was one of the patronesses of the Lenox flower festival. There are some rather nice people at Lenox this year. Mr. Mortimer Monks had two entries in the Morristown horse show. One of them was given a blue ribbon—a pair of hackneys. I wanted Billy to send our cobs there last season, you remember. Who do you guess is at Saratoga, Emily?"

Still there was no reply. Mrs. "Billy" lowered the newspaper to discover that her sister-in-law was sleeping placidly. Then she remembered. Aunt Emily had long since lost her interest in the doings of persons whom she knew but slightly, even though they might be among those who really counted. Mrs. "Billy" sighed resignedly and resumed her reading.

The daily society column was the last slender thread which connected her with a former remote existence. To this thread she still clung. As your inveterate whist-player will sit shuffling the cards long after the game has broken up, so Mrs. "Billy" handled caressingly these well-thumbed bits of social gossip. She was still musing over them when Cheltingham arrived from the city.

"What success?" she cried eagerly.

Then for the first time he realized how unshaken was her faith in ultimate victory. Instantly he decided that he could not tell her of his utter failure.

"There's nothing definite as yet," he said evasively. "In fact, I suppose I made rather a mess of things. I blundered about like a bull in a china shop. But I've seen your Mr. Trent."

"And stirred him up to investigate that woman?"

"I mentioned that, and I asked about the appeal. He says it will be slow work."

"I expect it will be. Still, I hope to have it all settled before Thanksgiving. We must be in town when the season opens, you know."

Cheltenham recalled the glimpse he had taken of the Redkirks' city home and of its present tenant. He was thankful that Mrs. "Billy" did not know. After that he trusted himself to say but little on the subject of the will case.

"Where is Miss Barbara?" he asked.

"Oh, Barbara has gone back to that poky little college town for a day or two. She is seeing some professors about something or other."

"Ah!" Cheltenham understood. Barbara was engaging that six-room cottage and preparing to elucidate higher mathematics.

Somehow Cresthills suddenly appeared to have lost its charm for him. An hour ago he had been in a great hurry to get there. The train could not carry him fast enough. But now the place seemed singularly vacant.

He wandered out on the veranda, seeking shade and solitude, only to run across Erastus Hicks dozing comfortably in a porch rocker with his heels on the rail.

Hicks was glad to see him. He said so several times. He shook his hand as if Cheltenham had been a long-lost brother. Things had been rather dull without him, Mr. Hicks declared.

"D'ye know, Mr. Cheltenham, I've come to think a lot of you," confided Mr. Hicks genially. "We didn't exactly hit it off at first, you and me. Guess I took you for one of those stiff, pig-headed Englishmen. But I take it all back. English or not, you're the kind of man I like."

Cheltenham was inclined to laugh at this frank declaration of approval, but he kept a straight face and assured Mr. Hicks that he was glad to hear of it. He valued the good will

of Mr. Hicks, so he asserted, and returned the sentiment.

Nevertheless, Cheltenham could not help wishing that Hicks would go off into another doze. But Mr. Hicks was very much awake now. He seemed bent on conversation. Presently it became evident that he wanted to say something in particular, but found difficulty in making a proper introduction of the topic. Having ventured one or two false openings, he cleared his throat noisily and remarked, quite irrelevant to any previous discussion:

"It's this getting married that makes most of the trouble for us men."

"You don't approve of matrimony, eh?" queried Cheltenham, a little amused.

"Oh, it's all right if it isn't done in a hurry. But it's a serious thing, picking out a wife. It's so all-fired easy to make a mistake. Now, a man don't buy a house or build one unless he's thought a lot about it beforehand, found out all the particulars and used his reason. He's careful and particular, for he expects to live in that house the rest of his life, perhaps. It's got to be just suited to him; not too big, not too small. But he's just as likely to rush off and get married, when he reaches a certain age, as he is to sit down to his next meal. And how does he pick out a wife? Just by her looks! Yes, sir, in nine cases out of ten he don't think of anything else but the color of her eyes or the way she wears her hair, or maybe it's only a bit of pink in her cheeks."

"But how would you pick out a wife, Mr. Hicks?"

"Me? I wouldn't dare try—again."

"Oh, then you have tried—and it didn't turn out well?"

Mr. Hicks shook his head dolefully. "No one ever made a worse botch of it. Her eyes captured me. Most remarkable eyes you ever saw, sir. I couldn't think of anything else for weeks. Her family wasn't much; father a town loafer, mother took in washing. I was clerking in a grocery store then and planning to have a business of my own some day. I might

have married the boss's daughter, too, and stepped right into his shoes. But no! I couldn't see anything but that girl's eyes. I asked her one night, and we were married the next day. We hung together about two years. When she ran off I was mighty glad to find she'd gone. She was a beauty, though."

Mr. Hicks sighed reminiscently. "Just spoiled me," he continued. "I lost my place and began to drift from one thing to another, never sticking long at anything. I was on the police force for awhile, and from that I got to know something about court business and politics. Now I'm a deputy, which isn't bad while cases are plenty. But when I lose my pull there's no knowing what I'll have to do next. All because I married in haste. Mr. Cheltingham, don't you ever marry a young woman just because she's pretty to look at."

A good-humored chuckle came from Cheltingham. "There's no immediate danger," he said.

Mr. Hicks wagged his head dissentingly. "That'll do to tell a man with no eyes."

"Eh!" exclaimed Cheltingham. Unexpectedly the discussion had taken a personal turn. "What do you mean?"

"Now, look here, Mr. Cheltingham, if I didn't think a thundering lot of you I'd never open my head. But I do, as you know. I ain't going to mention any names, understand, but when I see two young folks who don't look at each other nor speak for a whole day at a time, and then see the same young folks the next day go mooning off by themselves and making up for lost time—when I see signs like that, I say, I know what's coming; not mentioning, as I said, any names at all."

Cheltingham made no response. Once more the conversation lapsed and there was silence.

"Her name was Julia," said Mr. Hicks, who had a curious habit of omitting all introductory remarks. "The last I heard of her she'd married one of them race-track bookmakers. That

was the third or fourth after me, I ain't sure which."

"Then you were divorced?" suggested Cheltingham, by way of exhibiting toward the much-married Julia an interest he did not feel.

"No," said Mr. Hicks in a matter-of-fact way. "I never took the trouble to get a divorce, and I guess Julia didn't think it worth while. She knew I wouldn't bother her. Two of the others were paying her alimony the last I knew. Julia Cuddyback, she called herself then."

"Julia Cuddyback! Did you say Cuddyback?" demanded Cheltingham, suddenly straightening in his chair and staring hard at Mr. Hicks.

"Yes, Cuddyback. Queer name, ain't it?"

"Was she a large, stout woman?"

"Julia was a pretty sizable woman."

"With snapping black eyes?"

"Most remarkable black eyes. They could snap all right at times, too."

"It's the very one! She wears a purple dressing-gown with stains up and down the front."

Mr. Hicks declined to indorse this detail.

"But she does," insisted Cheltingham. "And you say she was never divorced?"

"Yes, she's been divorced—twice that I know of, and perhaps more'n that—but not from me."

"Hicks!" exclaimed Cheltingham, thumping the deputy enthusiastically on the back, "you're an angel! Do you want to know where your Julia is now?" Mr. Hicks glanced furtively about. "She's living in the Redkirks' town house and posing as the widow of old Jeremiah Redkirk."

"That would be just like Julia," commented Mr. Hicks imperturbably.

"But don't you understand, Hicks? She's the woman who claims the whole of this estate—Cresthills, all the money and everything else. And she's as good as got it, too."

Slowly the sluggish consciousness of Erastus Hicks encompassed the dimensions of this surprising discovery.

"Julia!" he whispered huskily. "Is she the one?"

"There's no doubt of it."

Mr. Hicks seemed dazed for a moment. Then one illuminating fact blazed forth in his bewildered brain.

"And—and I'm just a deputy, a hired watchman for her property! Well, I'll be cussed!"

"But it will not be hers long, Hicks. Why, you can knock her case into a cocked hat! The will she's banking on is drawn in favor of Mrs. Jeremiah Redkirk, who doesn't exist. Don't you see, man? When you are produced in court with the record of your marriage, she becomes Mrs. Hicks, Mrs. Erastus J. Hicks; and her cake is all dough."

"Think so?"

"It's as certain as fate!"

Mr. Hicks grinned. "I guess here's where I even things up with Julia."

That same day Messrs. Hicks and Cheltingham departed for the city on urgent and mysterious business. They went straight to the offices of Trent & Packham.

Mr. Trent did not slap Mr. Hicks on the back. He did not speak of him as an angel. He did say, however, after due consideration, that the possession of such evidence as Mr. Hicks had been kind enough to furnish put the affair in an entirely new light. It was just possible that the claimant might wish to compromise. It would be greatly to her advantage to do so for, as matters now stood, she would not only be liable to lose all the property, but might be indicted on criminal charges which would land her in State's prison. Mr. Trent would see what the opposing counsel had to say.

They were astute lawyers, the gentlemen of the opposition. Having learned that Mrs. Cuddyback was really Mrs. Erastus J. Hicks and had been for some twenty years, they hastened to practice the fundamental principle of the legal profession—that is, they took steps to insure the future ability of their client to pay counsel fees. They advised Mrs. Cuddyback to settle and drop out of sight as quickly as possible.

But Mrs. Julia Hicks-Cuddyback-

etc., entrenched behind all the solid opulence of the Redkirks' Fifth avenue house, proved to be balky. Settle for a few paltry thousands! Not she! She would fight to the bitter end.

This, however, was before she had been confronted, in the office of her own attorneys, by the stern-visaged Mr. Hicks.

It was an interesting, if not a touching reunion. She had discarded the purple dressing-gown for a somewhat gorgeous costume which revealed the ample fullness of her figure with more or less art. Her presence was almost imposing.

The reappearance of her abandoned and probably forgotten mate must have been like a bursting bomb under the tall towers of her ambition. Yet she never flinched. With calm scorn she scrutinized Mr. Hicks, making her leisurely survey by the aid of a gold-handled lorgnette.

"Ah, Erastus!" There was languid curiosity rather than surprise in her tone. "Haven't improved much in looks, have you? That bald spot doesn't add to your beauty. Eyes just as prominent as ever, too. So you've taken to dyeing your mustache? That is not altogether a bad sign; but you should put it on closer to the roots, Erastus."

Then, forcing a harsh laugh, she turned to the others, indicated Mr. Hicks with a wave of the lorgnette, and exclaimed:

"And to think—once upon a time I married *that*!"

Erastus, however, conscious that he held the centre of the stage and the balance of power, glared a defiant response. He refused to wilt.

"You've done a lot of marrying since then, haven't you, Julia?" he retorted. It was, perhaps, the most brilliant sally of his career.

"Take him away!" commanded Mrs. Cuddyback imperiously.

Mr. Hicks hastily retired to the rear. "They are an inconvenience, these surplus husbands," suggested Mr. Trent, "especially when one is establishing a claim to widowhood."

"Never mind all that," snapped Mrs. Cuddyback. "Let's get down to business."

There followed lengthy arguments by the attorneys on both sides, and an interesting exchange of legal phraseology, through which Mrs. Cuddyback sat serene and unmoved.

Her triumph was great as, after further sharp controversy, she sailed majestically out of the room, a claimant no longer, but well satisfied that she had been one.

Mr. Hicks blinked after her, speechless. When he recovered his voice he confided to Cheltingham:

"She's a wonderful woman, eh?"

XIII

VARIOUSLY at Cresthills did the news affect the different persons whom it most concerned. Mr. William Redkirk wrung the hand of the modestly blushing Mr. Hicks. He almost embraced Cheltingham. He lighted a cigar, threw back his shoulders, and inhaled a deep breath of relief.

"We pulled through, didn't we, Edith?" he demanded of his wife.

Aunt Emily promptly snatched off an apron she was wearing, marched to the kitchen, handed it gingerly to Mary and said vindictively, "Burn it!"

For the first time in many weeks Mrs. "Billy's" chin was up. Her eyes were turned toward the north and she seemed to be gazing at some distant object. Perhaps she was seeing again those frowning, tall, spiked gates. A rekindled fire blazed in her brilliant eyes.

"I have felt all along that it must come back to us," she said, "and now that it has I mean to live the kind of life I was meant for. I don't belong in the background. I know, because I have tried being there. I am going to the front. It isn't that I envy anyone, or despise anyone, either. But I am weary of just looking on. I want to lead. I think I could do it as well as those who do. I feel that I was born

for it. I don't want to follow. I want to be one of those who lead. I am going to try, anyway."

Mrs. "Billy" had no thought of talking vainly or boastfully. She was stating her creed. And, as Mrs. "Billy" said it, it sounded quite as impressive as other creeds which profess loftier ideals.

"Good enough, Edith!" exclaimed Billy Redkirk. "I'm ready for almost anything, so long as it isn't gardening. I've done enough of that this summer to last me a lifetime."

This, too, in its way, was more or less of a creed.

Meanwhile Barbara and Larry Cheltingham had gone out. Singularly enough, they sought the carved marble seat in the imitation Italian garden, the scene of their first conversation.

They had much to say to each other. More than that, a good deal of it seemed to need repetition. For example, Barbara found it necessary to declare several times that to Cheltingham they owed the recovery of their fortune.

"Me!" he would say. "Nonsense! Hicks is the hero of the hour. All hail to Hicks! You should have heard him engage in repartee with the Cuddyback person."

"But it was you who discovered Mr. Hicks."

"Hicks discovered himself."

"We shall always be grateful to you," insisted Barbara, "not only for this but for the noble, unselfish way in which you stood by us."

"Ah, at last!" exclaimed Cheltingham, with exaggerated fervor. Then he removed his hat and with his forefinger described a circle around his head. "It's there, isn't it?" he demanded.

Barbara could see only some reddish brown locks which were a little longer than most men would want them, and which curled at the ends.

"The halo, I mean," he explained. "A little faint, perhaps, but you can see it, can't you?"

Then she saw in his blue-gray eyes that whimsical audacity which she had

first noted with such scorn. She had no thought of being scornful now.

"I almost believe you deserve a halo, anyway," she admitted, with a laugh.

"Glory be! I've made many a wild promise to myself, but that's the first one I ever kept. Barbara, will you call me St. Larry after this?"

It was a most frivolous conversation, you see, and it continued as such until he managed to give it a tender and intimate tone. Once more, as he had under the big elm, he told Barbara all about it. Again she turned away and was silent. For several moments he waited, his heart sinking lower each instant, until he was almost on the black brink of despair. Then his blood bounded wildly. He noticed that she had reached one of her hands back to him. Eagerly he seized it. It was not withdrawn.

Half an hour later—although it might have been an hour, for that matter—he abruptly broke a sentence in half to announce:

"It shall be at Kelvey Castle, Barbara. There's no better place in the world for honeymooning. We'll spend it there."

"But," objected Barbara, lifting her head from his shoulder the better to look into his eyes, "I thought you were not on good terms with your uncle, the earl?"

"My uncle stopped being an earl more than a month ago, rest his soul."

"Oh!" said Barbara. "Then it is your cousin who—?"

"No. Wilton was the earl for two days and never knew it. Long before the news reached India he had managed to get himself shot with a tiger rifle. So it's my father who is Earl of Kelvey, and there'll never be a better."

"Your father! He is——?"

"Yes," said Cheltenham; "but you can't take back what you have said to me, Barbara, even if he is. Perhaps, too, you will be sorry for some of the bad things you've said against earls when you get to know him. If you're not I shall lock you up in the tower until you are."

Barbara smiled up at him. Then, after a thoughtful moment:

"Why did you not tell me before?"

"And have you turn me off the place for my pains! You thought it was bad enough when I was only the nephew of one."

"But now you will be an earl yourself some day, I suppose?"

"Let's hope that it will not be for a long, long time."

"And what is it that I must call you, Lawrence, when you are?"

"Just Larry. But please begin to do it now, Barbara."

XIV

No doubt you can recall the affair. St. Matthew's-the-Divine was transformed into a veritable tropical grove for the occasion. Ten truck-loads of palms are said to have been used in the chancel alone. The floral piece which screened the reading-desk was seven feet square. It represented the arms of Kelvey, done in vari-colored chrysanthemums. A duplicate of it blazed bravely in the Redkirks' city home.

The pews were no more than half occupied, it is true, although Mrs. "Billy" had sent cards to hundreds; but forty big policemen had their hands full to hold in check the mob of curious women who pushed, begged and implored for the privilege of "just one glimpse" at the noble heir to Kelvey and his fair bride.

For Mrs. "Billy" was stage-manager and master of ceremonies. From summoning the bishop to the selection of the ushers—and one of them was the smartest cotillion leader in town—she directed every detail. Considering all things, she worked marvels. She began by announcing that it was to be a severely simple, strictly private wedding. All publicity was to be avoided. So the representatives of the Sunday editions clamored for facts. Mrs. "Billy" took them into camp and, somehow, they were successful. The double-page articles which prepared the public for the coming ceremony were illuminated, not only with portraits

of the principals, but with pictures of the bridal gown, views of Kelvey Castle and reproductions of the Kelvey crest. Even Billy Redkirk, attired in hunting clothes, was pictured. In one column was traced the growth of the Redkirk millions, in another was recorded how the earldom of Kelvey was established and the manner in which all the previous earls had lived and died.

Fortunately for Barbara's peace of mind she never saw the more flamboyant accounts. Cheltenham did, however, and chuckled. He had divined Mrs. "Billy's" intentions from the start, but he allowed her to have her own way without protest.

Among those who vowed they would not go was Mrs. Dickinson. But she was there. If she had not forgotten her fumigation in the Valeburg town hall she had at least forgiven. She joined the crush at the reception.

"I am counting on you for my dinner dances, my dear," she told Mrs. Redkirk.

Mrs. "Billy" smiled. "It's sweet of you, but we are to spend most of the season in London. We've taken the Marquis of Dillington's house—to be near Barbara, you know. So sorry. Hope you come over."

Thus it happened, after all, that Mrs. "Billy" did not knock timidly at those frowning gates. She did not achieve Newport. It was Newport that achieved her. Somewhere between that September and the following July Mrs. "Billy" Redkirk, of Cresthills, disappeared. But in due time there arrived in Newport, straight from the Court of St. James, a gracious, confident personage, whose advent was heralded by a fine salvo of social trumpets.

"Ah-h-h!" they whispered. "The mother of the new Countess of Kelvey! She's all the rage, you know."



THE CELESTIAL CHILD

THERE is a quiet room in heaven
Where childless women sit;
And ever at the fall of even
The dear Christ enters it,
Not as the glorious Lord of light,
Nor crowned with that effulgence bright
By which the world is lit.

But as a little child, alone,
He nestles at their feet,
And each one calls the babe her own—
Oh, it is wondrous sweet!
The Christ's dear mother sits apart
And smiles to hear each lonely heart
With mother-rapture beat.

CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH WELLS.



DEAD men tell no tales, but they leave a lot of anecdotes after them.

JAMES STILES, WIDOWER

By Gertrude Lynch

JAMES STILES—Styles in later life—had a face plain as his name and a manner as plain as both. There was a certain sureness about all three, however, which won him many friends. He had the easy popularity of the negative virtues, he was a good listener, rarely had a pressing engagement when you wanted him for something else, and never spoke ill of anyone. Added to these he had a number of other admirable qualities, good to have in the house, which do not, however, raise the possessor to any nth power of success in the race for fame where an overweight of anything, even perfection, is apt to handicap the owner thereof.

Men inhaling dry breaths through pipe-stems and women damp ones over tea-cups were accustomed to say, in a phrase of approval, amazement or laudation, "I don't know why it is, James don't seem to stand for much, but I like him."

Naturally, having a mind tuned to commercial matters, through inheritance, predilection and habit, coming to his heirship of roll-top desk as surely as another man does to brush and palette, he eschewed his own kind in hours of recreation and sought bohemia for relaxation, a refined, upper caste of bohemia where people did real things and admired without stint—their own work and, incidentally, that of others.

James, having done nothing momentous himself except gain a modest livelihood in a modest way, admired all. He kept no reserve of superlative, but, like the widow's cruse of oil, his praise was ready for any emergency whether that happened to be a new

book, an embryotic landscape, an equestrian statue of General Washington or a brochure on love, lavender and languor, the Fortunatus stock of the modern poet.

One time in midwinter James became aware that the special firmament in which his orbit was so diplomatically placed that it did not interfere with the erratic ones of his companions was much agitated over the coming visit of an heiress who was heralded by that reputation for beauty and wit which is awarded so universally and generously to the feminine possessor of this world's goods.

When James saw her first at the studio reception given in her honor he envied at a distance. Men of merit were there, and he had a way of effacing himself at such times, feeling his incompetence to cope with those toward whom he had a mission of admiration, not of rivalry. The heiress was rosy in cheek and gown, the lamp-lights shaded to a dim radiance softened angularities, and her wit, if neither one- nor two-edged, needed no such polishing, for nearly any turn of speech passes muster coming from the lips of reputed millions.

Men came, saw, did homage and before making place for the successor had each a special word of explanation and praise of his own achievement, more or less coated with humility. One had weary publishers waiting for his approval before the proof-sheets of an *édition de luxe* were sent to press; another was about to sign a contract for which every sculptor in the land had competed; his model, dragged from obscurity at a moment's notice

and sent at the last gasp, outranking all; there was a third who had painted miniatures of all the royal families of Europe during a summer vacation; and a poet whose picture as a professional beauty outranked his Omarian quatrains in popularity. The latter recited his famous stanza, "To You," his eyes saying what his lips dared not, that he had a presentiment of her existence before her creation.

She was deeply impressed by all, almost too deeply for comfort. In her retired home she had longed for the time when she should meet genius face to face, but, if the truth must be told, she had not expected to find it quite so self-engrossed, so fatiguing.

A wave of ongoing humanity brought James Stiles to her in spite of himself, brought him and left him stranded there.

"And what do you do?" the heiress asked, gazing expectantly into his face.

He hesitated, feeling himself at a disadvantage; then the power of an habitual sincerity forced the words from his lips. He spoke them shamefacedly but sturdily: "I am plain James Stiles, in the coal business."

Three months later, "plain James Stiles, in the coal business" and the heiress were married. Like many of her over-advertised kind, the heiress turned out to be a very modest-looking little person in the uncompromising light of day, and the fortune with which she had been credited amounted to a few thousands, which she lost on entering the united state, according to the will of a spinster aunt who had never been able to read the Creator's mission in afflicting humanity with what she considered an unnecessary sex.

From a person of unimportance, the marriage ceremony changed James Stiles into a man of some distinction. His was a dual life, a commonplace individuality amid commonplace associations, with hours of recreation in a crowd of celebrities, to whom his mediocrity was as refreshing as unadorned wall-paper after the serpentine decorations of an *art nouveau* interior.

His family and business associates had looked askance at these inroads into bohemia, believing that nothing but ill would come of such a connection. But even the most skeptical could find no weak point to criticize when, as benedick, he displayed an unfailing regularity at his dinner-hour, never spent the evening away from home except when his wife was with him, visited neglected relatives with more and more frequency as time went on, and spoke loudly and often of his new-found happiness.

His friends of the other world witnessed his gradual withdrawal from them with disappointment. They could have spared a greater man with less regret. Occasionally he would reappear at some special function, his wife on his arm, an expression of beatitude on his face. Their eyes never wandered far from each other's glance. If one made a statement the other corroborated it. They usually left early, with a home-sweet-home tone to their farewells.

Good husbands, like poets, are born, not made; but it must be confessed that James Stiles enjoyed the distinction his devotion caused. Hitherto he had been overlooked or reproached by his family, an umbrella for the rainy days of his famous and forgetful friends.

It was a distinction which had little competition and its rarity made it emphatic. The small bump of egotism in his phrenological make-up, which had been reduced to a flat surface in the presence of celebrity, began to assume normal proportions. As another might talk of his book, his statue, his painting, he spoke of his wife, his domestic life, his certain path to declining years through a peaceful valley.

His relatives listened to him as those historical persons must have listened to the prodigal son descanting on the taste of home cooking, with dry husks in mind for comparison. Bohemia, where fame and fortune camp out one day and are gone the next, listened with equal interest, the picture of the married life of one of their number

representing to all the others the single sure and stable thing in a shifting landscape. It resurrected early resolutions and awakened hopes of a later and better life when rheumatism and the ingrowing soul should demand attention.

It is said that everyone has a talent for some particular thing, if it can but be discovered. James Stiles had stumbled on his by chance; he had a talent for being married, and this talent was approved and commended as talent unalloyed ever is, even in a captious and cynical world.

Then the unexpected occurred. Mrs. Stiles, young, vital, with no thought of the morrow, took cold. The warning was neglected, as those who are unused to illness neglect the beginnings of a physical collapse. Her cold rapidly developed into something more serious, and all at once, without a word of farewell, with no time to prepare for the inevitable, James Stiles became a widower.

After the first moments of wrestling with his grief, he sent for his relatives, who responded with alacrity to his summons. They found him speechless; a red-eyed, back-bent man, who groped blindly for their hands and shoulders, and shook his head in assent at every suggestion made to him in respect to post-mortem arrangements.

Later, when his voice returned, he went over and over, to each in turn, specially chosen for the moment's confidence, an account of the happiness of his married life and particularly of those last days when he had no suspicion of the end. He seemed never weary of these reminiscences and his relatives showed no sign of boredom, fearful that indifference might send him in despair to his scapegrace friends who, in their turn, waited on him loyally, attended the funeral in a body, sent flowers and overwhelmed him with invitations, recipes for "getting away from himself," or wrote him letters of advice on this subject when he refused to listen to verbal suggestions.

After the funeral, James spent a

long time in seclusion, having taken his wife's body to her girlhood home in a far Western town, where it was rumored that for the first time he was reveling in the scenes of her childhood and early youth, writing a poetical obituary and designing a gravestone.

On his return he moved into a small bachelor apartment, taking with him various personal adornings, articles of intrinsic and sentimental worth which had about them the aureole of his wife's accustomed use.

Hither came a steady stream of visitors to relieve his lonely hours from the weight of a pressing sorrow. Even those who had drifted away from him in his benedick days felt it incumbent upon them now that he should not sink into melancholia. It became quite the custom for carriages with freights destined for dinners, balls or receptions to stop at James's *en route* for a half-hour or so. Relatives' houses were opened to him at all times; certain rooms in them were now spoken of as set aside for "Poor James," and extra plates were laid at the tables, ever ready for his unannounced appearance.

His mourning was deep as the grief it represented; his hat was but a brim on a crape tower; his clothes ebony without its luster. One of his maiden aunts had discovered a bunch of artificial curls, the property of the deceased, and from these a mourning-ring and chain were made; his scarfpin was a black pearl presented by a coterie of friends to whom his assistance in moments of financial interrogation had ever been ready. Dressed for an outing, he looked like a Personified Sorrow stalking in a crystal maze of doubt.

For many months he refused all invitations except quiet dinners in the family, to the third and fourth removed. The friends who came to relieve his melancholy were received in dimly lighted rooms. Old letters, letters of the courtship days, were read aloud, and memoranda of the once happy household whose petty economies and regulated routine had never wearied. There were moments, moved

thereto by some extra brand of sympathy, when he trod once more the asphodel fields of sentiment and took his listener with him.

Men who came to him trembling on the verge of matrimony trembled anew when they left, but from a different cause. Why venture when the end might be so near the beginning? Others went forth animated to the deed, fearful that their happiness might be snatched from them before their grasp encircled it. Women, born lovers of pathos, came and wept at the recital of the brief dream. Plain, unpretending, commonplace as he was, James Stiles represented to them the husband of their choice in everything except physical and financial attributes. Each had believed in the existence of a lover who would weep over their letters and their powder-puffs, wear chains made from their hair, talk of them to other women and be indifferent to the attractions of these feminine listeners, no matter how flagrantly displayed.

Every woman in her heart commends the action of the man who refuses to replace the picture in a shrine by another—even though the other may be her own.

Mrs. Stiles, deceased, had had moments of prettiness, such as come to all; they were fugitive, as was her wit; but, viewed from a distance, she appeared an ideal of loveliness and cleverness, with whom no mere mortal could hope to compete. Strangers who were taken to visit the sorrowing husband would remark that the late Mrs. Stiles must have been a wonderfully beautiful creature, and the answer, coming from one whose memory of her vaguely blended with a composite photograph of others, was always in the affirmative. Those of the fair sex who know how little real beauty there is beneath the great majority of masculine laudation, gave also a pitying assent, which seemed to hope for a like idealization when their brief term of existence was over.

When James at length responded to reiterated assertions from relatives, friends and even the family physician

that he must go into the world and forget his grief, he became the idol of the circles where he had first been received on sufferance, and later valued as the representative of the anchors and brakes of life.

The husband who does not proclaim his disappointment at marriage is a rarity, but the widower who sees the second summer wax and wane and still talks unremittingly of the departed is practically *sui generis*. James enjoyed the isolation of superiority, but it was an isolation rather of the letter than of the spirit, for he was loudly welcomed to his old haunts and a few new ones, always preceded by the same unusual introduction—that of one who was faithful to the memory of his wife. Young girls were warned that he would never remarry; the more experienced, who disbelieved, had their trouble for their pains, as the saying goes. No one could assert that he was indifferent or that he overstepped the bounds of propriety, but it was easy to see, in his gracious, almost courtly manner—for manner as well as face had improved under the discipline and emoluments of grief—that he loved the whole sex on account of One.

As the months passed, widowed and spinster aunts dropped out of the ranks, each remembering "dear James, who has set an example to all." Those of the living who might have resented this favor did not, feeling that he had rightfully earned his reward. With the opportunities afforded by his increased income, he took advantage of certain speculative tips and profited thereby. By easy steps he became the arbiter of manners, morals and finances in the family parties, and to the younger and flightier members who confessed their complex heart troubles, he had but one oracular prescription, which was embraced in the word "faithfulness," and however Mormonesque the questioner may have been when he came, at departure he had exchanged the heart's Utah for an Eden whose Eve, like her prototype, was unrivaled.

It cannot be denied, even though a

biographer should fall into the usual weakness of hero-worship, that James loved the role in life which had been forced upon him by an untoward fate. He had been proud as a husband and had enjoyed the brief term when, as benedick, he had stepped from comparative obscurity into a searchlight more or less distinct; but as widower he held the actual centre of the stage, and he who has once experienced that sensation, say those who know, is never again satisfied with the obscure corners of life's wings. It is true that James mourned sincerely and lengthily, but there was an ecstatic reaction to that mourning which few who have lost their better halves enjoy.

To hear his name, when he was announced at a social function, greeted by that peculiar hum which heralds the great in low-voiced explanations; to have the softest chairs and liver-wings at family dinners; to meet the pathetic droop of languorous eyes from feminine sympathizers, instead of the mere allurements of coquetry accorded other men, was to self-love the fattening diet of forbidden fruit.

The beginnings of friendships are weak things, hardly worth while tracing to their source, for friendship is only so named through growth, habit and the daily joining of the multiplicity of myriad interests. The friendship of Jenkins and James was a case in point—what matter where it commenced? It was genuine enough to have begun in childhood and had elements of steadfastness which suggested a directors' dinner.

It was Jenkins who introduced James into bohemia, and it was he who was a go-between with the elect of the hours of recreation and the elect of the genealogical tree. Jenkins called himself sympathetic, with a many-sided interest toward human nature. He contended that he was equally at home when, as guest, he enjoyed the sight of a huge roast in front of him, a butler at his elbow and a vintage of port on the sideboard, which made him seem distressingly verdant while he upheld a

conversation which still took cognizance of the Thirty-nine Articles, as when he was entertained at a forty-cent table d'hôte, where rivers of red ink and small talk flowed unceasingly from caviar to cordial. Others said that he had no backbone. Whatever the cause, the result was most satisfactory, for he ate a dinner at his own expense as rarely as he disagreed with the opinion of a possible host.

Jenkins was a very small fly on the outer rim of that vast cobweb at whose centre sits the great spider called Art. He painted inconsequent landscapes at inconsequent sums on which he lived, supplemented by his dinners out, with a degree of *savoir faire* which would have surprised a student interested in sociological problems.

With a marked ability for making both ends meet and tie in a bowknot, James had never been chary of his hospitality. In their bachelor days they had enjoyed many a convivial tête-à-tête at his expense as well as many when as co-hosts they entertained Jenkins's friends, James furnishing the dinner and Jenkins the enjoyers thereof. In return, Jenkins was ever ready to see James through the function of a family repast, uphold his dignity under the pressure of relatives' eyes and diplomatically evade their interrogations regarding the Forbidden Land, which, it was hinted, were made so that the questioners might disapprove with more foundation of fact. He enveloped bohemia in an atmosphere half conventional, half hazy, which allayed fear and aroused expectation at one and the same time. The relatives were apt to aver that it could not be so bad a place if Jenkins was its exponent, and then with that uninvited second thought remember that men are but wolves in sheep's clothing.

The courtship of James had been a sore affliction for Jenkins. There had been few loose hours hanging heavily on the fiancé's hands, and when these occurred they were more apt to take the form of selfish rhapsodizing over pipes in the room of one or the other

than the cozy dinners which were given up while the usual period of economizing which precedes matrimony took place. Jenkins bore with his disappointment philosophically, wise enough to see a conventional ending to this as to other courtships. He was not far wrong in his reckoning, for when the household settled down after the honeymoon Jenkins was the valued guest who never lacked a welcome and never allowed one to become cold through disuse. No matter how devoted a couple may be, there are moments when they enjoy the intrusion of the outer world for the joy of the after tête-à-tête. Jenkins's visits were the sauce piquant on the sparsely flavored dish of matrimony.

It was Jenkins who spoke loudly and frequently in James's absence of the young couple's unprecedented devotion, and when they made their occasional reappearances he preceded them with words which made these appearances events. It was Jenkins who kept alive bohemia's interest in a marriage which seemed to answer for all time the question as to whether it really was, generally speaking, a failure, and it was the same faithful friend who triumphantly pointed out to still carping relatives the futility of further criticism of a man who had but one name inscribed on the pages of his heart—one name and one duty.

It was Jenkins who first appeared at the scene of sorrow and during the early days of affliction ate many mourning dinners with unimpaired appetite, while he listened sympathetically to twice-told tales of courtship and marriage, supplemented by the epilogue of black-bordered adjectives.

It was Jenkins who paraded his companion's grief for him and was proud as James himself of the furor it created. Many an impresario has taken less pride in the prima donna made from raw material.

It was Jenkins who one day received a note written in a strange hand, signed with an unfamiliar name and delivered by a deaf-and-dumb messenger,

imploping him to come at once, for James Stiles was desperately ill and needed his immediate attendance. The address was that of a suburb, a little out of the beaten track of travel, but easily reached from the city, like all suburbs, within the hour. The mystery of the strange handwriting, the affliction of the messenger, aroused the usual suspicion of the city dweller whose insignificance and fear of bodily harm seem in indirect proportion.

He pondered the matter for awhile, then wrote a note explaining his absence in large characters which he left in plain sight for the mute to read while he went into his inner room to throw a suit of pajamas, one sock and a soiled collar in his bag in his trepidation and presentiment of coming ill.

The way led by James's bachelor apartment, and he stopped there to learn that the occupant had not been home for over a week. There seemed, therefore, some foundation for the call, but the trip on the local in the deep-growing twilight of an early winter's eve, by the side of a speechless companion, was not inspiring.

At the station named in the message a rickety carryall with a driver muffled into a lack of identity by means of a turned-up coat collar and a heavy scarf did not tend to lighten his apprehensions.

He wanted to go back, but was ashamed, for his reason told him that without an enemy in the world, without any money or valuables, having left a note explaining his departure and destination there could be no real danger; but there are situations when foreboding overcomes judgment.

After a drive of a couple of miles, they approached an isolated villa where the driver turned and announced the end of the journey in hoarse accents.

Jenkins took heart. Under the depressing conditions of season and time, the villa had a cheery aspect which did not convey the idea of tragedy. Through the light fall of snow he could detect the edges of well-trimmed box and the outlines of oval flower-beds. The square porch was glassed in for a

sun parlor. Between dainty muslin curtains an open fire, a couple of children playing on the rug and feminine touches of grace and homeliness were evident. It was the country residence of a well-to-do business man.

The door was opened while his fingers were on the knocker. A petite woman, of the brunette type, with lustrous eyes and a sallow skin, witness of foreign blood, opened it and at her accented words of greeting Jenkins felt a thrill of gratitude for the money he had once expended, after the sale of a large canvas, on some lessons in French, a waste he had often deplored, as his sole return seemed to be the power of ordering dishes in French of waiters who understood his own language perfectly.

He stepped inside, lifting his hat with what he hoped was a foreign grace. That had gone with the lessons and had been practiced valiantly.

"Gee swee—" He sought for the other word.

"Oui, oui. He speak of you often. He say *quelquefois* you come. You respond to the doctor's word at the once. I thank you."

"You are?" He looked about helplessly. She must be a distant cousin, but why this secrecy? He had often resented a certain reserve in James, particularly since his widowerhood, contending that friendship, like love, demands a clean slate. He had felt piqued at James's unaccountable absences now and then. The present situation showed that he had cause for complaint.

"You are?" he repeated.

Her eyes opened a little wider.

"'Are, monsieur?'" and then with the subtle reasoning of her nationality that different tongues produce strange confusion of thought:

"His—yes, his *femme*, of course."

"*Femme*—a woman, a wife, a feminine being." He wished that the Gallic tongue was not so prolific of synonyms. *Femme*. No, it could not be. James was not that kind. Every way he turned there seemed a mental impasse.

She took his hat and coat while the children, leaving their toys, came toward him.

"You think them like heem? *Qui?* They are his miniatures?"

She was pleased at his assent; she would have resented, with the pride of a true wife in her husband's plainness, a statement that they looked like herself.

He followed her upstairs, a mental arithmetic sum in his thought.

The older had said five years and it was six since the death of the first wife. Um!

James had sent for him at the moment when it was thought that the attack of pneumonia might prove fatal. The crisis had been met and passed favorably, but it was feared a relapse might ensue. He explained this weakly, evading the look in Jenkins's eye and the approaching explanation that the eye demanded. He begged Jenkins to stay until all danger was over, and then became seemingly unconscious.

Jenkins made himself comfortable without delay or protest. There was no work on hand to urge his return, and the comfort of the home appealed to him. He decided that there was no cooking in the world like the French cooking, so different in the home from that of the restaurant. He was flattered to learn that one of the children had been named for him without his knowledge and consent, and that he had been a godfather by proxy.

The doctor and nurse excluding them both from the sick-room, he resumed his French lessons under madame's tuition, and, his old facility returning, graduated easily from the knowledge that Mary's cow has wandered into Anne's garden to that of the facts concerning James's second marriage, which had taken place as he returned from his wife's burial in the Western town where he had been taken ill and was nursed back to health by one as forlorn as himself, a newly arrived, lonely little person who had expatriated herself from her beloved France to make a living in the new world, and had met

with only discouragement and loss. James, sympathetic to feminine distress, a born lover of home and wife, had joined his loneliness to hers and dispensed with the usual conventionalities of mourning.

She explained incidentally that it was probably due to the difference in faith and up-bringing which had alienated his relatives and that her only sorrow was his enforced absence on business, the encroachments of a busy man's "affaires."

But that James had proved as good and true a husband the second time as he had the first, there was no shadow of doubt.

Later, a shamefaced man, James, propped up with many pillows, with a face emaciated by his illness, and burning with the flush of an inward fever of humiliation which consumed him, attempted to explain. Jenkins waved the explanation airily aside.

Jenkins had done a good deal of thinking in these convalescing days. He realized and forgave the moral zig-zags of his erring friend. He saw how James, with an innate love for the centre of the stage, had never had a chance to stand in the spot light of public approval until it was too late. The moderate praise he had achieved as a married man had implanted the germ of unrest in his system. He had weakly yielded to temptation made so easy for him by others' approval. Jenkins himself had often pulled the string for James to dance. Circumstances lending themselves easily to deception, it would have taken a

stronger man to announce boldly a second marriage made in such hot haste, born and nurtured though it was in loneliness and grief.

He recalled his own encomiums on James's faithfulness and smiled grimly at his discomfiture. He could lash him with the words of his ridicule and scorn. He could strike a compensating balance for his own humiliation in the humiliation of the other.

But, on the other hand, he saw before him a vista of probable week-ends in the charming household to which he was already endeared; he went further and saw an old age at the corner of the fireside, for he was too poor to marry and had no inner magnet for heiresses.

James would have condemnation enough and to spare from others. It would be punishment sufficient to step down and out from the stage centre; to play no longer the role of the Afflicted.

It was surely not for friendship to add its weight of disapproval.

He met the questioning expression cheerfully, turning his own eyes obliquely cityward with what a close observer might have termed a wink. "You can count on me, old chap." It was the term he had employed in former days when James had sought his services to avert the criticism of the family.

It was a long time since James had needed its underlying strength. His lips, ornamented with a three days' growth of beard, trembled syllables of thankfulness and, turning on his side, he drowsed peacefully, as a child sleeps whose punishment has been remitted.



TWO ROSES

THE dawn is sweet with fragrance of a rose new-blown today,
 But ah! my dreams of yesteryears and long last nights of bliss!
 Oh, I'm fain to have my faded rose, whose perfume died away
 With the radiance of a moonbeam and the ceasing of a kiss!

MAISIE SHAINWALD.

THE MOUNTAIN CABIN

By Edwin L. Sabin

UP Bear Creek, six miles from Eley's ranch, on a little resting-place of the mountain-side, amidst the pine and fir and spruce, stood the cabin. The folk at Eley's, and in communication with the folk at Eley's, knew it as the cabin of "that Chicago couple livin' out for their health." One may run across many such cabins in Colorado.

Above and below the cabin stretched the mountain. From the cabin front porch extended a view embracing twenty miles of valley, seventy miles of peak and range—snowy, wooded, bare. It was a view always grand, always beautiful, never the same, ever inspiring to noble thoughts. Day and night, like a harp twanged by unseen fingers, rose and fell in praise the majestic symphony of the million trees.

In style the cabin was rustic; but it was by no means frail, for it was built of logs, and well sided with slabs with the bark on. Supporting it was a stout foundation of cemented rocks rounded by a long-departed glacier. Being laid upon a light slope the foundation was higher in front than behind, and the front porch was reached by a flight of steps. From the flight of steps a faint path wound down, finally skirting Bear Creek, to join the valley road; up the path came the cabin's supplies from the ranch—butter, eggs, milk, and the like.

At the rear of the cabin was a shed, for wood and miscellany; a dug-out, for perishable provisions, and a tank, which held water from the creek, piped therein by an ingenious system. The cabin appeared to have four rooms.

Such was the spot, and such was the cabin. Around, the pungent, friendly pines; overhead, the blue Colorado sky; below, the valley; in the distance, the range: a home in the world, yet not of it; a home where peace might bide and love might bloom and two might live by themselves, all-sufficient to each other.

Day came early, for the cabin fronted full upon the east. Night, too, came early, for the mountain behind swallowed the sun while yet he had an hour of grace. Now it was eight o'clock, and already the first coyote had signaled "All's well," the May evening had deepened into gloom, pine had blended with pine, and stars had spanned the blue from crest to crest. Upon the moist air floated the wild, fresh, strangely soul-stirring odor of balsam and mountain sage.

Amidst the darkness were set two of the cabin's windows, softly aglow as if their curtains might be phosphorescent. But the glow had source in an argand-lamp, whose rays, mellowed by its round globe, spread a cheerful light through the cabin's sitting-room and generously overflowed into the blackness pressing against the panes.

The sitting-room looked very pleasant and cozy, for bizarre Navaho rugs covered the floor, bright-colored paper and cheerful pictures covered the walls, comfortable furniture was scattered here and there, in a fireplace a pine chunk flamed and sputtered.

Who would have imagined that beleaguering so close were mountain, vale and forest!

At one end of the room, from a table strewn with magazines and books, smiled the lamp; at the other end chattered the fire; lying upon a Navaho-blanketed couch, against the wall, at one side of the fire, sneered a man; in a chair at the other side of the fire wept a woman.

The woman was beautiful; not with that beauty which would command a lover to write verses to her eyebrow, to her waist, to her ankle, but with that beauty of a gracious whole, that beauty which dazzles not but ever radiates and sweetly warms: the beauty of a woman. Apart from such one might forget the shade of hair, the color of eyes, the shape of lips; but he could not forget *herself*.

The man was tall, heavy of frame, but slight of weight, fine of hair, fine of brown mustache. As he moved he coughed convulsively. The cough told much, but the thin hands, the thin face, the marvelously clear complexion, whose only color was collected in the hollow of the cheeks, the shadowed eyes, the pallid lips now distorted by the cough, told more.

"Oh, yes; you'd be one of the 'inconsolable' kind—I don't think!" he panted. "Rats! You'd be just like any other woman; bury a man in the morning and get another at noon. That's the way with them."

"Don't talk so, Ralph," sobbed the woman. "I don't see what I've done or said to make you."

"Boo, hoo, hoo! Well, don't bawl about it," returned the man cuttingly. "Better save on tears. You might be shy of them, and need them after I've shuffled off."

The woman quickly arose, and trailing her crimson house gown crossed and knelt beside his couch.

"Don't be cruel to me, Ralph darling," she pleaded, smoothing back his hair. "I can't bear it, when we two are here by ourselves and might be so happy. You're all I've got, dearest."

The man irritably jerked aside his head, as if resenting her fingers. But the fingers patiently followed, and

under their touch he grew more passive. The woman's face, bending over, although mistreated by weeping, was filled all with compassion and yearning; through their tears the eyes looked tenderness.

"You needn't think you're going to get any life insurance out of me with your wheedling," he snarled. "Do you think I'm fool enough to leave money for another man to spend? Not much! Let him go hang, for all of me!"

Oh, so often in the mood he was tonight had he boasted thus, of that wretched life insurance. The woman sighed.

"Have I ever said anything to you about life insurance, dear?" she inquired mildly. "I don't ask you to take it out, on my account. You are all I want—just you. And you mustn't talk of 'shuffling off,' dear. It hurts me to have you. For you aren't going to, you know."

"You bet I'm not," declared the man, with a vindictive laugh. "I'm going to live on, if only just to fool you."

"It wouldn't be fooling me, dear," objected the woman, still gently smoothing his hair. "It would be what I wish most of anything in the world; that, and having you good to me, at the same time."

"Bosh!" he grunted. "You needn't say you prefer being tied down to an invalid, when there are so many better men running loose."

"You won't always be an invalid, dear," insisted the woman eagerly. She leaned and kissed his forehead, where the ugly lines still remained. "You're getting better right along—aren't you?"

The man's face cleared; no disease is so hopeful as consumption.

"I believe I am," he declared confidently. "I cough less, don't you think so? You've noticed it yourself, haven't you?"

"Oh, yes; and you certainly sleep better, too," encouraged the woman, smiling brightly.

"And I eat well, too," he asserted.

"Of course, I'm still confounded weak."

He scowled.

"That's only natural," comforted the woman. "You can't expect to do everything at once, you know, dear."

"It's the altitude," he said peevishly. "I'll never get strong as long as I stay so high up. There was an article about it in the last medical journal I read. I'm getting better in every other way, but I don't get strong. Seems to me what I need is to go lower down, and to some place like California. Yes, sir; California—Southern California—is the place now for me. What do you think?"

"All right; let's go to California, then," agreed the woman, with just a trace of weariness beneath her cheery tones.

"I believe that three months in California would set me up so I could begin work at something," continued the man, now with feverish animation. "I could start that poultry ranch I've been planning for next year. It would keep me out of doors, and would be a first-class business. Of course," he added, with a return to his former sneer, "it would be hard on you, keeping you so boxed up on a ranch, but no matter how well I was it wouldn't do for me to go back to office work in town—not right away, at least."

"I shouldn't mind, dear," assured the woman soothingly. "So long as I'm with you I don't care where we live or what we do. You're all my world. Shall we go to California, then?"

"How can we? You know very well we can't, unless we walk!" he replied, again peevish. "We've put nearly all our money into this cabin."

"But if you ought to go to California, we must arrange somehow, Ralph," she said earnestly.

"Send me on, and give you a chance to stay behind and cut loose, I suppose," he accused, his jealousy aflame.

"You know I didn't mean that," she reproved. "Only, where there's a will there's a way, and if you think

that California is the place for you, then we must go to California."

"Well, if you'll kindly tell me where we're to get the money to go with and live there with, we'll start," he sneered. "What we have now would scarcely be enough for the Pullman porter."

"How much ought we to have, dearie?" she asked, patiently smoothing his hair.

"We ought to have two thousand dollars clear; that would get me strong and give me a boost on the poultry ranch," he said. "But instead, I suppose I'll have to stick up here, where the altitude holds me back."

"Perhaps up here will prove all right, though," proffered the woman hopefully. "Don't you know, we were recommended to come? We tried North Carolina, and that seemed too damp; and we tried San Antonio, and that didn't help you much; and we tried Arizona, and that wasn't quite suited to your case; and then we came to Colorado, and it has agreed with you the best of all—hasn't it, dear?"

"I don't know whether it has or not," said the man irritably. "Of course, I'm getting better; I can see a difference every week, and so can you. I don't cough so much, and I eat well; you say that yourself. And I believe I'm gaining in weight, my face is filling out—don't you think so?"

"Oh, yes, dear. I've been noticing that."

"But I don't gain strength. It's the altitude; I know it's the altitude. All I need now is to get to a lower level, where it's warm—not hot and dry as in Arizona, but to a climate like California. Put me in California for three months—just for three months—and I'd be practically well. Can't you see? I made a mistake in coming so high up."

"Perhaps not, dear," soothed the woman. "You mustn't expect too much in a short time. We've got our own little cabin on the mountainside, and you're growing better right along, and we're together where nobody bothers us, and we ought to be so happy; and if we can't go to California

we must be content here—especially when you're doing so *well*! After you're acclimated, maybe you'll improve faster."

"There is one satisfaction: you're where other men can't nab you, anyhow," he asserted. "Not until I'm out of the way, anyhow."

"Have I ever said that I wanted other men, dear?" she asked sorrowfully.

His only response was a sneering "Humph!" and a shrug, equally contemptuous, of the thin shoulders.

"Have I ever been anything to you but loving and tender and kind?" she persisted.

"Oh, I suppose not," he confessed grudgingly. "Women always like to nurse. But you can't make me believe that a woman prefers a patient for a husband. Then she wants a *man*."

"Don't, Ralph," she entreated, her eyes filling.

"And I *will* be a man, too," he declared combatively. "Two thousand dollars and three months are all I ask. That is all—and I'd be a man just as good as any of them. Not but what I'm getting better as it is," he added, looking up at her with covert challenge.

"Of course you are, dear," she agreed compassionately.

"Here I am, doing just as I've been told to do, and trying, trying, trying, all the time. Everything around is strong; the mountains are strong, the pines are strong, the animals are strong; and I breathe the air and look at the blue sky and sit out in the sun, and the world lies there at my feet, and still I don't get strong. I can't walk as far as when I first came here. Other people do what I'm doing, and grow strong! Didn't Mr. Whiting, Helen? He got strong, and went back East, didn't he?"

A racking fit of coughing seized him, and swayed him back and forth.

"Yes, dear, he certainly did. He lived as we are living, for six months, and went back to Chicago as well as anybody."

"And how bad off was he?" gasped the man. "Worse than I?"

"He was pretty sick," evaded the woman.

"Possibly the altitude didn't affect him as it affects me," argued the man. "What's one person's meat is another's poison. Carolina and Texas and Arizona and Colorado have done what they can for me, and I believe I've simply been losing time. If I'd gone to California in the first place, I'd have been cured long ago. And now I'm stuck here on the mountainside, broke—or mighty near broke. And all I want is a chance; three months somewhere else would make me well."

"But you're getting better, Ralph."

"Yes, I'm getting better."

"And you're comfortably fixed, and you don't require much money, here, to live on, and you've got me."

"You bet I've got you!"

A sudden knock was heard upon the front door. The woman threw back her head and listened; the man waited, curiously. Silence reigned. The knock was repeated, gently, insistently. With a questioning glance at her husband the woman quickly arose, and stepping to the door opened it.

A man's form was outlined against the darkness without.

"Good evening," said a man's voice.

"Good evening," faltered the woman, slightly retreating.

The man entered, and with him entered the breath of the night—humid, chill, odorous with the mountain; a breath of mystery and of solitude.

"Good evening," he said again, with a half-laugh, to the man on the couch, and with his eyes taking in the whole room at the same time.

He was tall, broad-shouldered, black-haired, dark-eyed, straight-nosed, crisp-mustached, white-teethed, unshaven but not unkempt—a man of virility which instantly permeated the atmosphere to every corner. About his neck was a red kerchief, upon his body was a stained brown canvas mountain coat, his trousers were tucked into the usual mountain boot, lacing halfway to the knee.

He might have been a prospector; he might have been an engineer; he might have been—almost anything, for the mountains harbor much.

"Good evening," growled the man on the couch.

"I was prospecting around the hill here, and saw your light and thought I'd stop in," explained the visitor bluffly. "A light looks good to a man out in the pines. These nights aren't what you'd exactly call hot," and he shrugged his shoulders and laughed.

"Sit down," invited the woman, now closing the door. "Draw a chair up to the fire."

The man on the couch said nothing. "I believe I will, thank you," accepted the visitor.

He grasped a chair, and with an easy liteness planted it before the blaze.

"I reckon if I'm going to sit comfortable I'd better remove some of my furniture first—if you'll excuse me," he remarked.

Forthwith he brusquely slipped off his stiff canvas-covered, blanket-lined coat, and unbuckling his cartridge-belt which, with the pistol in its holster was revealed beneath, tossed all together to one side.

"Nice things in case you're out in the cold world," he said, with a smile at the woman, "but kind of unhandy for a social call."

In the freedom of waistcoat and blue flannel shirt sleeves, dropping his drab felt hat upon the floor beside him, he sat down and thrust his hobnailed soles to the blaze.

"I sure never expected to find a shack away up here by its lonesome," he observed genially to the woman, who had seated herself on his right. "Out roughing it, I reckon?"

"We're living in the mountains awhile for my husband's health," explained the woman.

The visitor glanced sympathetically at the unresponsive figure on the couch.

"I savvy," he said. "'Lunger'?"

The man on the couch scowled.

"No, no," corrected the woman hastily. "He hasn't consumption.

It's merely a bronchial trouble, and we thought we could get rid of it quicker by coming up among the pines, where the air is pure."

"Nothing serious," mumbled the man on the couch.

"And he's improving right along," asserted the woman.

"O—oh!" drawled the visitor, glancing at her and nodding understandingly. "Sure. *Doesn't* look as though he had much the matter with him, does he?"

"Your cabin?" he asked, diplomatically changing the subject.

"Yes; we built it last fall," said the woman.

"Say, but you've got it fixed up mighty cozy, though!" commented the visitor, half turning and surveying the details. "Wouldn't mind camping out this way myself. It beats a tent, I reckon."

"We like it," said the woman briefly.

"From the East?" queried the visitor.

"Well, we came here from Arizona, but we used to live in the East. Chicago's our home."

"Chicago's a great place," volunteered the visitor.

"Ever been there?" demanded the man on the couch shortly.

"Once or twice, maybe," responded the other, eying him. He addressed the woman again.

"It'll be mighty fine up here in the summer."

"Yes, if we stay," she said, with a fond little smile at the couch. "But just before you came in my husband was talking of changing to California. He thinks the altitude here doesn't agree with him."

"Well, now, you hadn't ought to leave a layout like this," asserted the visitor, turning to the couch, interpreting a subtle imploration in the woman's tones, "specially when you're getting on so fine. Why, you stay on here through the summer and by fall you'll be as frisky as a regular old grizzly in a berry patch!"

"Yes; she wants me to stay here

and die," sneered the man on the couch. "I know the game."

"Ralph, don't!" entreated the woman, tears coming to her eyes.

"See her weep already?" sneered the man. "Won't that come in handy when she has to play the inconsolable widow!"

"Why, say, now," expostulated the visitor, glancing from one to the other in a puzzled manner, "you don't look like a man who's about to cash in—does he! And she don't look as though she wanted you to, either. If I had an outfit like this I'd just naturally drop my lines and stay by it like a cow-pony tied to an alfalfa stack."

"If you like it so well come around the day after the funeral and hang up your hat. She'll doubtless be glad to see you," sneered the man.

"Ralph!" besought the woman helplessly. "Don't mind him; he jokes so!" she said aside.

"Humorist, is he?" drawled the visitor; but his mien was somewhat contemptuous as he deliberately surveyed the personage on the couch. "I reckon you're supposed to be the man of the family," he continued, addressing him again; "so if you're so stuck on California, why don't you go? All you've got to do is point west and slide."

"I'm willing to go any time," asserted the woman.

"Oh, yes, you're a great talker when you've got anybody to listen," sneered the man on the couch. "Why don't I go to California? Because I can't. I haven't the money."

"That's a pretty good reason, pardner," drawled the visitor.

"And so I'll stay here until it's up to my widow. The only thing I can do is fool her on the life insurance. I had just broken the news to her, when you entered, that there wasn't any. She was feeling rather despondent, in consequence, until the appearance of yourself, being a stalwart specimen of the welcome sex, made life worth living to her again."

"But seems like I heard you say

a minute ago you were getting better," drawled the visitor, still eying him steadily.

"He is—he is, aren't you, Ralph? He only talks this way to tease me," quavered the woman.

"Well, I should reckon it teases you," remarked the visitor coolly. "But I suppose he'd get better faster in California—that's it."

"It's the altitude here is holding me back; I have to fight the altitude," affirmed the man eagerly. "Some people affected as I am with this—this chronic bronchial trouble, can't stand altitude. It weakens them. That's what it does to me. I seem to be improving—I *am* improving, in certain ways, but I stay weak. The altitude saps my strength. But three months in California would set me up; I know it. That's all I need—three months. And nevertheless I can't go," he concluded bitterly. "Three months between me and health, and here I've got to forego them and struggle along with the odds against me."

"We've been to so many places," faltered the woman. "And we thought this cabin would prove just the thing."

"Maybe it will," encouraged the visitor. "Living out this way cures lots of people."

"But I tell him if he thinks California will do him any good, we must go there—even if I have to walk while he rides," she continued. It seemed a relief to have someone, if only a stranger, upon whom for a moment to lean. "I'd walk gladly, for the sake of seeing him there."

"I believe you sure would," affirmed the visitor, gazing upon her with open, honest admiration in his voice and face.

The man on the couch, watching the two narrowly, flushed with anger.

"Who the devil are you," he snarled fiercely, "coming in this way and telling my wife what you think she would or would not do! Lord in heaven! Can't I even get a cottage thirty miles up in the mountains, but that some man sneaks in and tries to

make a cuckold of me? You'll burn your wings, friend, for your pains. That's all. I'm not dead, and, by George, I'm not going to die, if only to spite you all. But it's disgraceful. I won't stand it, Helen. You can't work it, just yet. So you might as well bid your good-looking knight-errant tra-la-la, and tell him to keep on his own preserves, or there'll be trouble."

The woman, with face scarlet, stared straight ahead into the blaze. Her hands flew to her cheeks, as if to hide her shame; then suddenly fell, clenched, to her sides.

The visitor looked full upon the speaker, and calmly, almost insolently, laughed.

"It's all right, pard," he said. "You're not going to lose her. She's a woman, and women are the sort that don't stampede. If she was a man I bet she wouldn't stay with you five minutes. You're locoed, plumb locoed; that's what's the matter with you. And as for wings—well, much obliged, but as I size up just at present I don't feel any sprouting." He paused, and laughed again—a short, bitter little laugh. "I reckon if I told you who I was, you'd take back that about the wings. What do you think, old man?"

"I asked who the devil you are, and I want to know," insisted the other sullenly.

"Sure. Of course you do," agreed the visitor pleasantly. "So I'll tell you. I might be named Jones or Smith—I knew a man named Smith, once—or—or Higginderfer—I knew a man named Higginderfer, too—but the fact is, I'm just naturally called Colorado Kid. That's what. Nice name, ain't it?"

"Oh!" exclaimed the woman, with a shuddering little intaking of breath, staring at him.

"Colorado Kid, eh?" sneered the man on the couch. "So? We've been reading about you, I fancy. Quite interesting and elevating. You're the fellow that—"

"I'm the fellow said to have done

'that,'" interrupted the visitor sharply. "But I never made a woman cry—less 'twas my mother," he added softly. "She's cried over me, back home, I reckon."

"But I thought they—the officers—were after you!" exclaimed the woman. "We saw something about it in this morning's paper. What are you doing here? Won't you be caught?"

"Yes, they're after me, all right," said the visitor easily. "And they'll catch me—but not till I'm ready to be caught, I'm hoping. When I'm ready I'll give myself up. I didn't do it. I know what the papers say I did, but I didn't. Lookee here," he appealed, squarely facing the woman, "look me in the eyes, and see if I'm lying. I say I didn't do it. I——"

From the couch came a scornful sniff. The visitor faced quickly in that direction.

"And I tell you I didn't do it, too. But I don't reckon your opinion would count very much against me, anyhow." And he turned back. "Yours would, though. I didn't do it, and I can prove I didn't, if I'm given a chance. But what chance has a man got, unless he takes it, when he has a price on his head, dead or alive? Dead is the easiest. Dead, I'm sure guilty and executed, without the bother of a trial. It costs only a cartridge. But I didn't do it. I wasn't in twenty miles of the place, and I can prove it, when things come round right for me. A day in Denver, to do as I please, that's all I ask. There's a woman there—or she was there; she knows, and if I can get to talk with her before I'm corraled, it's all right. But if it's known I want to see her, and can prove up by her—then I lose out. Savvy? The sheriff's bound to land me, this time, and plant me for good."

"A woman? What kind of a woman?"

"A real woman. Your kind of a woman," he replied boldly. "I know what you thought, maybe; but don't. That's the wrong trail. I just helped her, once, and now she can help me, if she'll come forward and answer

yes and no, a couple of times. She will, too, if she learns about me, and they let her. All I want is to get to her first and explain. You see—she didn't know me for Colorado Kid; I was just a man when she needed one."

"Humph!" commented the man on the couch.

The speaker flushed, but smiled.

"That's the truth, pard," he said over his shoulder.

"I hope you'll reach Denver, then," said the woman.

"I hope so, too," he replied cheerfully. "But when there's a bounty of fifteen hundred dollars on a man's scalp he's liable to reach one of two places mighty sudden, and neither of them's Denver."

The eyes of the man on the couch, lowering so steadily upon him, widened, then narrowed.

"That's a good sum. I suppose you feel important," he sneered.

"Not exactly, being as it's fifteen hundred more than I deserve," returned the other over his shoulder. "I never did stand for taking another party's share of things. Now, about this woman," he resumed, with a trace of awkwardness. "She's your kind—and she's my kind. I'd like to have you believe this, in case I never do reach Denver, and prove up. Give a dog a bad name, I know—and of course I'm Colorado Kid. I've been on the range, and I've busted bronchos, and I've shot up towns, and I've done a heap of talking and a heap of foolish acting. Cowboys will, you know. It's once a year for them, and the rest of the time it's sweat or freeze, go hungry and sleep when you can. But all the time there's been only one kind of woman for me—*your* kind; the kind I left out in Illinois, when I cut loose. That's my home place—Illinois."

"I was born in Illinois," said the woman.

"Then you'd better ask your friend to stay all night," snarled the man on the couch, his jealousy bursting into words.

"If you want to sleep, dear, we'll excuse you," said the woman plead-

ingly, but with gentle dignity in her voice.

"I expect you would," he retorted sarcastically.

"I'll be going in a minute," volunteered the visitor. "Night's my time for traveling, just now." He hesitated. "It's God's country, Illinois is. It's not like this country out here—tilted up on end and growing mostly pine and prickly pear."

He hesitated again. The man on the couch, who had been fidgeting restlessly, changed position and sat up. His face was white and a sinister purpose smoldered in his eyes. His wife glanced at him anxiously.

"Going to try sitting awhile, dear?" she asked.

"There was a girl, back in Illinois," resumed the visitor, reddening beneath his tan. "She's a woman, now. I reckon that maybe if I'd have stayed we might have hit it off, and perhaps I'd be in a cabin of my own tonight, instead of being in somebody else's. Her and me, in a cabin up in the hills—that's what I always get to thinking of when I listen to the pines; and the claims I've staked out would cover, I s'pose, from here plumb to Ouray. I'd—I'd even be willing to be a 'lunger' if I could have the girl I love to myself, up among the hills—like you and him are living. But I've missed out. Some blamed coyote lied about me and I thought she believed it, and I got mad and skipped. That's all—except that I'm not *plumb* bad. I've sort of suspicioned that some day she'd hear about me, or maybe even come across me—the world's mighty narrow, somehow—and she'd be glad to know I'd kept clean—clean as a man can keep, and be where I've been. Her name was Nellie Thomas, and she lived at Apple Valley, Illinois. Maybe you'll meet her yourself; and if you do, I want you to tell her what—what I've been saying. Tell her I'd rather have Apple Valley, with her in it, than the whole State of Colorado. And I've kept pretty clean—for *her*."

The man on the couch straightened forward, and his thin lips slightly

opened on his clenched teeth as, his eyes fixed upon his visitor's broad back, he worked cautiously with his feet at something on the floor.

The woman impulsively leaned toward the speaker.

"Bert," she said, with the all-tender, reassuring smile of an angel. "Bert, don't you——"

A sudden horror leaped into her eyes, and widened in an instant over her whole face.

"Ralph!" she cried, springing up, "Ralph!"

Her chair clattered to the floor.

In a flash the cowboy was on his feet. His chair went spinning across the room.

"Look out, you blamed fool!" he rasped, whirling toward the couch, as he kept in front of her. "That gun's loaded!"

Crash!

The sitting-room was filled with smoke. The cowboy staggered a step, and slowly sank in a heap. The man on the couch peered, and lowered the weapon.

With a stifled shriek the woman knelt over the huddled form. The face stared wonderingly up at her.

"Why, Nellie, it sure is you. I didn't know, before. You see, every right kind of woman I've met has looked like I thought you might look. I'm mighty glad I've had a chance to tell you. I——"

The voice stopped short; the speaker shuddered, choked. The woman felt something wet beneath her; a blotch of blood was spreading across the Navaho rug under her knees.

"He got me, didn't he! I had a

notion somebody was going to get me, before I made good at Denver; that's why I stopped in, just for luck. You looked so like white folks in here."

"Oh, he didn't mean to shoot you; he didn't mean to shoot you!" moaned the woman.

"Sure he did! But it's all right. Even—a—greaser—can—pull a—trigger. I've—kept—clean—Nellie."

The man on the floor was dead.

The man on the couch spoke.

"You might as well get up out of that mess, Helen," he said harshly. "The curtain's down, and it's time to clear the stage. If any other of your old lovers comes around he's liable to be treated in the same way."

He laid aside the revolver, and rose to his feet. His eyes kindled and he resumed exultantly:

"Fifteen hundred dollars! Do you see? We take the reward. Now I'll get well, absolutely well! We can go to California. All we have to do is to produce this body, claim the money, and skip. We'll pack up in the morning, and leave the cabin to be sold. No more of this altitude for me, keeping me weak and run down, thank heaven! Get up! If I hadn't shot him somebody else would. I hated to do it—but it meant for me California. You'll see how quick I'll improve out there, away from this altitude. Why, three months—three months——"

The relentless cough strangled him, and pressed him, exhausted, to the couch again.

The woman stood upright, and lifted rigid arms and staring eyes.

"Oh, God!" she cried.



THE POINT OF VIEW

THE PLATITUDINIST—What a small world it is, to be sure!

THE OTHER FELLOW—That depends on whether you're trying to dodge a creditor or to walk three blocks in a pair of new shoes.

THE LURE OF JUNE

NOW'S the time to place empirics
 On the shelf where they belong;
 Now's the time for love and lyrics,
 Time for laughter and for song!
 Down each winding upland alley
 Blooms the blushing eglantine,
 And from valley back to valley
 Thrushes cry, "Be mine! be mine!"

Now's the time for meadow measures—
 Linnets by the lake and ling;
 Now's the time for pastoral pleasures,
 Summer marrying with spring!
 Skies above a sapphire wonder;
 Leas below like golden seas
 Wide outspread with perfumed plunder
 For the armies of the bees.

Now's the time for honeyed blisses,
 When the south winds droop and drowse;
 Now's the time for lovers' kisses
 Stolen under maple boughs!
 Hark!—the love-notes of the starling,
 Clear and pure and passionate!
 Let us not delay, my darling,
 To make answer to his call!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



NOT HIS FAULT

"YOU married me for my money!" wailed the angry wife.
 "Don't blame me for that," growled the cold-blooded husband. "I
 didn't know how else to get at it."



NEVER DECLINES

SPUNGER—I can drink any quantity of champagne!
 HIS FRIEND—Yes, any given quantity.

THE INVALUABLE POSTLEWAITE

By L. H. Bickford

"AND Postlewaite," said Peter as if in afterthought, although he had held Mrs. Carton's note throughout the conversation, "your services are again in demand."

Postlewaite came back to the table, standing stiffly.

"Mrs. Carton, I presume, sir?"

"Yes, Mrs. Carton writes that she is in a state of mind over her little after-opera supper next Tuesday. She wonders if you couldn't help her man Wilkins out—as you did last week. Between us, I don't believe Wilkins will ever please Mrs. Carton as a butler."

Postlewaite smiled gravely and sweetly.

"I fear not, sir. He is an ordinary man, with little experience in families. He came, sir, from a restaurant."

"Just so," assented Peter. "I do not know how you feel about being loaned out, as it were, Postlewaite"—he recalled a phrase in the note: "Postlewaite is a dear—he knows just what to do and there is never any trouble, everything goes off well."

Again the grave and sweet smile of the valet.

"Anything to oblige you, I'm sure, sir. Of course, it interferes with my duties here, Mr. Vanthorpe, as you must know, and sometimes I feel that you are slighting yourself for your friends, if I may say so."

"It is a nuisance now and then," acknowledged Peter. There was the last loan of Postlewaite, when he had remained three days at Mrs. Morton's, training her new house servants, while

Peter's clothes were sadly in need of attention.

"And I do not forget," continued the employer of this valued servant, "that you have any number of chances of bettering yourself. Still, I prefer loaning you to losing you, Postlewaite."

"I would not care to go elsewhere permanently," admitted the invaluable. "I really would not, sir. And, naturally, I would prefer to serve you exclusively. I have never been better situated."

"Just so," said Peter again. "It must be an infernal nuisance being sent to people's houses as a sort of first aid to the socially helpless. But that's the penalty of doing well what you lay your hand to, isn't it, Postlewaite?"

"It is better," declared Postlewaite, with great solemnity, "to be a good servant than a poor financier."

And again Peter said, "Just so." Then Postlewaite greatly surprised him.

"And if it's all the same, sir, I really would prefer to go out less. As I have said, Mr. Vanthorpe, anything to oblige you, and if Mrs. Carton cannot get the right servants, or if Mrs. Ginning doesn't know how to manage a dinner for twenty, and that sort of thing, I'm only too pleased to step in, at your orders. I have had some very hearty compliments, and the largess is not to be considered trifling—in fact, your friends have been quite generous—but—"

Postlewaite paused. He was, for once, quite embarrassed.

"You mean you do not care about being 'bossed,' as we say, by so many people?"

"It's not that exactly," said the invaluable. "It's something that has happened to me."

Peter started.

"Great heavens, Postlewaite, you're not—you're not going to be married? You're not in love?"

Postlewaite smiled wanly.

"I'm afraid it's worse, Mr. Vanthorpe. It's something I can't quite explain. It's—"

He hesitated, then drew from one of his pockets a square little box. This he gave to Peter, who raised the lid and drew from a nest of white tissue paper a diamond bracelet. Peter stared, turning the ornament over and over.

"Just so," he said blankly.

"A bracelet, sir. Miss Carsonby's bracelet."

"Exactly," said Peter. "But how came you by it?"

"I stole it," said Postlewaite, without turning a hair or raising his voice.

"You stole it? Oh, come now, Postlewaite. You cannot expect me to believe that. Nobody doubts your honesty. Why, if you were that sort you might have made away with a ton or two of somebody's silverware long before this. Miss Carsonby dropped it and you picked it up, perhaps. Or it was given you to keep for a time—perhaps the family safe was inaccessible. There are a lot of good reasons why you should have it."

"There is no good reason, I am afraid, sir. It is all very mysterious to me, but there is no doubt I took it the night I was sent for to help out with the orchid dinner at the Carsonbys'. If I might explain—"

"By all means," burst out Peter. "Tell me everything, man."

Postlewaite lowered his voice.

"I was passing through the upper hall while they were at dinner. I had gone to the room at the top of the house where I was told to place my suit-case. And as I came down, and

along the hall—there are bedchambers on either side—I passed Miss Carsonby's room. I just glanced in and on the floor near the dresser I saw this. There was nobody about, and I stepped in and picked it up. I put it in my pocket and went on downstairs. I kept it all evening, and when I came home next day I placed it in this box, as you see. That was a week ago."

"Why," cried the astonished Peter, "why did you take it—what did you want with it?"

"I have no use in the world for it," said Postlewaite dejectedly. "The thing fascinated me—I could no more resist carrying it off than I could resist sleep after I had been up all night. I just had to take it. And after I came home, sir, I wanted to run back with it—and I was afraid."

Peter's thoughts ran wild while he tore Mrs. Carton's note into bits.

"You were right, there," he said; "you couldn't have done that, with such an explanation. But the Carsonbys must have missed it."

The invaluable looked helplessly about him.

"That's the worst of it, sir. They believe Miss Carsonby lost it. It wasn't missed until four days ago, so I learned from Miss Carsonby's maid. Nobody in the house can be reasonably suspected of robbery, and Miss Carsonby is careless about her jewels. But it is all very serious for me, sir, since it lies on my conscience, and most of all makes me fear that I am not to be trusted to go about into people's houses, even if my services are sought."

"Oh, pooh!" cried Peter, for want of something to say, "pooh!"

"Especially," continued Postlewaite, "as it is not the first time this has occurred."

Peter flung the bits of paper into the air and sank back in his chair.

"Not the first time?" he repeated.

"Not—the—first—time?"

Postlewaite regarded him gravely.

"I told you it was serious, sir. It has been growing on me. It is something I cannot account for. I

walk my room, thinking about it, fearing what I may do next."

Peter revived.

"Sit down, Postlewaite," he said, "and tell me everything."

Postlewaite preferred to stand. Peter insisted. In the end the invaluable sat very far to the front of a rocking-chair, facing Peter.

"The first time I was afflicted—for I think I may say it is something like a disease—was when we were at the Kirklands', in the country. Your apartment was next to that of old Mr. Kirkland, as you may remember, sir. Well—it was the second evening and the gentlemen were all in the billiard-room—I had been arranging your luggage when something seemed to urge me to step into Mr. Kirkland's bedchamber. Directly I opened the door my eyes fell on a large solitaire diamond stick-pin that Mr. Kirkland sometimes wears in his cravat—and which I have heard remarked about as very poor taste, if I may say so, although old gentlemen do about as they please. It is a very precious stone, at any rate. I stood just inside the doorway and looked at it for a very long time, and then—then I walked in and took it. And I had it when we left, two days after. And then I found it was a burden, sir, and one day I got away and went back by an afternoon train, and under plea that you had left your office keys in the room you had occupied I entered the house and replaced the pin. I placed it in Mr. Kirkland's bureau. He was wearing it in town the other day, and if he missed it at all, I suppose he came to the conclusion that he had mislaid it."

Postlewaite sighed. His manner was the manner of one steeped in sorrow; his matter was wholly convincing.

"And the next occasion?" asked Peter.

"Was before I took Miss Carsonby's bracelet. You had asked me to call at the club for some papers Mr. Allenby left there for you. I was told you were in the reading-room, but that

was a mistake, for you had been to the club yourself and had seen Mr. Allenby. But I went into the reading-room and found but one occupant, Colonel Sanderson. He was asleep in a chair beside a window, and—you may believe me or not, sir, ordinarily I wouldn't have more than noticed him—all at once I was attracted by a diamond ring that was slipping off the little finger of his right hand, his arm being thrown over the chair arm."

"You took the ring?"

"I simply couldn't resist taking it."

"But I remember something about that. Colonel Sanderson supposed he had lost it, and there was a notice posted. Later he found the ring in his room in the club."

"I managed to get into his room," explained Postlewaite, "through an excuse that you had sent me there. And the next time—the next was this matter of the bracelet, sir."

Postlewaite then sat in silence, a pathetic figure. That he suffered was evident. That his story was to be believed Peter did not doubt.

"It is simply amazing," declared Peter presently. "If I didn't know you so well, Postlewaite—but have you never been tempted to take anything of mine?"

"I seem to be attracted only by jewels," confessed the invaluable. "You sometimes have a great deal of money lying about, but that never tempts me. Money never tempts me. And I don't know that you would call this—this other a temptation more than is meant wanting to take the jewels. I am ever so put out until they are restored."

Restored! The word brought Peter's thoughts back to the white box.

"Just so," he exclaimed; "Miss Carsonby must have her bracelet."

"I have tried twice," confessed Postlewaite, "and failed. When I called on her maid the other day I could invent no excuse to go to Miss Carsonby's room, and of course I couldn't just drop it anywhere. And

then Miss Carsonby went to Boston and I waited at the train, intending to get it into her luggage some way—you had sent me with a box of flowers—but there were some young ladies to see her off and I couldn't reach her traveling-bag because of them. And it would have been odd to place the bracelet in the box of flowers——"

"It would have been senseless," exclaimed Peter. "Miss Carsonby would have concluded that I had taken her bracelet by way of a joke—and I am not a practical joker."

"Just what I considered, sir."

"But did you sound, Miss Carsonby's maid about the bracelet? You say they do not think it was stolen——"

"They think it was lost, sir. There is a reward offered in the *Herald*."

Postlewaite produced a newspaper clipping and Peter read it with interest. Then, for him, the situation cleared.

"You must leave the box at the newspaper office, Postlewaite," he said. "That is the simplest way out—I wonder it did not occur to you."

"It did, sir," Postlewaite hesitated, "but I write a very poor hand, and I was in doubt about addressing the wrapper."

"As for that," said Peter, "I will address it for you."

"Thank you, sir."

The invaluable brought the ink while Peter tied the little parcel; and, the address accomplished, Postlewaite sighed in relief as he started for the door. There he paused.

"About Mrs. Carton, sir? Should I assist her man Wilkins—now that you know about my unfortunate weakness?"

"We cannot disappoint Mrs. Carton, Postlewaite. But I would suggest that you strive to overcome your—er—weakness. You were right to come to me. Perhaps confession will set you right."

"Yes, sir," said Postlewaite. "I hope so, sir—and thank you."

Miss Carsonby had returned from Boston and sat beside Peter at Mrs.

Carton's opera-supper. She wore the bracelet, as Peter noted with satisfaction, and it was her only ornament. He had often wondered why she wore this solitary bauble, and he was somewhat startled to hear her say, almost immediately they had taken their places:

"Postlewaite into the breach again!"

"Then you know?" he stammered.

"I know that he's back of about everything Mrs. Carton does in this line," she declared. "I see Postlewaite in the table arrangements, in the color scheme, and—yes, in the terrapin. He has been consulted in everything."

"Oh!" exclaimed Peter in a tone of relief.

"I sometimes wonder that you let him out as you do—but you're always willing to be imposed upon, Peter."

Peter murmured that it was really no imposition.

"And it cannot be denied that he's clever. Postlewaite is one of the men, even though in humble station, who do a great deal of good in the world. He is a rock in the social sea on which to climb and spread luncheons and dinners. Some of our newcomers would perish without him. I only wish"—Miss Carsonby was looking across the table—"that some of them would ask his advice on what to wear as well as what to eat."

Her voice sank to a confidential tone that exempted all about her save Peter. As he followed her glance he felt strangely disturbed. Mrs. Jenkinson glittered across the table in diamonds rivaling the electric illuminations. Was it merely coincidence that Miss Carsonby had mentioned Postlewaite and indicated a jewel display? Was it? Of course, Peter told himself, when Miss Carsonby immediately changed the subject.

But he was unhappy. The incident disturbed him and he began to wonder if Postlewaite's strange affliction might not overcome him in the presence of so much that was dazzling. If a mere ring, on the hand of a sleeping man, tempted him; if a dia-

mond bracelet and a scarf pin were lures, what of Mrs. Jenkinson's diamonds? And so, even with the music of Miss Carsonby's voice in his right ear, Peter did not enjoy the supper. He was abstracted, uncommunicative, unresponsive.

"It is awful, I assure you," he said finally to Miss Carsonby, who had chided him for his inattention, "to have a train of thought. I beg your pardon, but you see you put something into my head, and—well, I couldn't get it out. I am not myself this evening. And then the opera was 'Aida,' and it always makes me melancholy."

"After all, that's rather nice of you, Peter," replied Miss Carsonby. "It is something to put a train of thought into anybody's head. Only, I trust it is a limited train and not what they call a 'mixed.' Did you ever ride in a 'mixed'? Papa says——"

She was the daughter of a railway president and had often charmed Peter by her father's anecdotes, told second-hand. And Peter had often laughed at the anecdotes. Even now he was becoming interested in the incident of the mixed train and the suburban party and was prepared for the dénouement when he looked across the board and was horror-stricken. For, glancing up from the Jenkinson necklace to the tiara in the Jenkinson hair, he observed that the latter was suddenly transferred to the palm of a man's hand. And Postlewaite was directly behind Mrs. Jenkinson, with a champagne bottle poised. He was looking directly into Peter's eyes. An instant later he turned quickly about—after filling Mrs. Jenkinson's glass—and then the lights in the dining-room were suddenly extinguished.

When Snifely, the detective from Tinkerton's, called on Peter the following afternoon he met a man who was greatly upset, but Snifely did not wonder over this since the other guests at Mrs. Carton's opera-supper, on whom he had also called, were similarly upset. The detective approached the sub-

ject soothingly. Peter remembered, as Miss Carsonby and Mrs. Jenkinson and Miss Gadsby and Mr. Oakley—and, indeed, all—had remembered, that those at table were busy with the terrapin when the room was plunged in darkness. He remembered that Mrs. Jenkinson had screamed, that somebody had pressed open the door leading into Mrs. Carton's observatory, that there was great confusion, and that, in the midst of it, the lights blazed out again. And he remembered that of all within the room only Postlewaite showed presence of mind and freedom from panic. For Postlewaite, who had been pushed against the sideboard, cried "Thief!" directly the lights were renewed and rushed into the conservatory followed by the guests—including Mrs. Jenkinson, who had lost her necklace and her tiara, and Miss Gadsby, who had lost her brooch, and Mr. Parker, of Chicago, who had lost the largest diamond ever a man wore in his shirt front. And Postlewaite had discovered the open window through which the thief undoubtedly escaped, and everybody had looked through it while Mrs. Carton became hysterical, and Mr. Carton swore everybody into secrecy, lest the incident find its way to the newspapers. And after Mrs. Carton had calmed and the Tinkertons had been notified by telephone, Peter had come home.

And Postlewaite? Yes, it was true he had been keeled over by the bandit invader when the lights went out, as had Wilkins, Mrs. Carton's butler, and John, his assistant. Wilkins, indeed, had cut his forehead on the glass on the sideboard, and there was a large bump on Postlewaite's head which Mr. Snifely had doubtless examined the night before. Postlewaite had grappled with the bandit, and this was the result. As for his remaining at the Cartons', that was by Mrs. Carton's request.

All this Mr. Snifely knew before he reached Peter. The guests at the party had about the same general story. It had been a bewildering experience. Snifely asked some ques-

tions about Postlewaite which Peter answered definitely.

Name? Henry John Postlewaite.

Age? About forty, Peter judged, although he never questioned his valet on that subject.

Habits? Of the best.

Former service? Well, Peter had him from Johnnie Templeton, who had him at college, and beyond that he had served Lord Somebody before coming to this country.

In general? Peter could not speak too highly of Postlewaite. He was in demand everywhere. He seemed to know just what to do. Ask anybody to whom he had been loaned, Mrs. Carton in particular. The preposterous idea of involving him in the matter, anyway! Did Postlewaite come in the front door—which was shown to have been open—walk through a corridor, switch off the lights and then knock himself down, after he had been all the time in the room? Ridiculous! Had not Mr. Snifely and his brother Tinkerton searched the servants the night before, within an hour after the thing happened? Could \$50,000 worth of jewels—was the value indeed so great?—be suddenly secreted by Postlewaite or Wilkins or John? And more. Defending Postlewaite's character until Snifely reminded him that he was merely forced to "look into all phases of the case" Peter became positively eloquent. After Snifely had gone he wondered how he had brought himself to this defense. He knew he was a sort of accessory after the fact, and yet—well, Postlewaite was not inherently a criminal. He was possessed of a strange disease—the unhappy victim of an impulse he could not control. Peter would hear his story, and never again should Postlewaite go about to be tempted by the glitter of gems.

Withal, Peter was curious. How had his valet contrived this affair? Three days passed before the question was answered. Mrs. Carton had refused, once by note and twice by telephone, to release Postlewaite while the absurd Tinkertons were harassing

her household. It would be a reflection on Postlewaite's honesty—and his head such a sight, too. As for her confidence in Postlewaite, if Peter would only relinquish him she was certain he would be a decided acquisition for her.

The invaluable came home on the fourth day. He was waiting when Peter returned from business and followed his master to the library, where, after the door had been locked, he placed several parcels on the table and stood meekly at attention. Peter sank in a chair and crossed his hands.

"This time, Postlewaite," he said, "this time, I must say, you have made a pretty mess of it."

The invaluable blinked.

"I knew I would do it, sir. I knew it when I saw Mrs. Jenkinson come in with that man from Chicago. I was overcome, sir. If you was ever tempted by marbles, Mr. Vanthorpe, you'd have some understanding."

"Marbles?" repeated Peter, for this seemed far from the subject. "Marbles?"

"When I was a boy, Mr. Vanthorpe, I envied every boy his marbles. It made no difference that I had marbles, too—all sorts and beautiful ones. Whatever they were they never seemed to be quite as desirable as those possessed by others. And when I could not make a trade I would just knock down the other boy and take his away from him. Or if he was a larger boy I would bide my time and steal them. And yet I didn't care for these other marbles after I got them. It just seemed as if I wanted them because they were not mine. And it's that way now about the diamonds. Mr. Vanthorpe, sir, it's an awful affliction."

"It is a terrible affliction," acknowledged Peter, "and the worst of it is, Postlewaite, it's likely to cost you something some day. It would be far cheaper for you to have appendicitis, and less scandalous." He looked over the packages. "I would like to know, my man, where you hid these jewels when you turned out the lights

—I do not ask as a matter of curiosity, but simply to get the affair straight in my mind."

"It was very simple, sir. I just dropped them into the salad that stood on the sideboard. It was a fruit salad, the kind that Mrs. Carton has a hobby for. After the—after the excitement nobody wanted any salad, and by the time the detectives came the dish was in the kitchen."

"Just so," said Peter. "And after that? You must have been rather closely watched all the time you stopped at Mrs. Carton's, after the detectives came. And I suppose you know you've been one of the suspects."

"After the salad-bowl, they got into the bean-barrel. They have since been in the bean-barrel—until this morning, when the detectives left, and I got these boxes and slipped the jewels in them. If I may say so, sir, the question is what to do about it."

"There is just one thing to do about it," said Peter positively, "and that is to return them."

"As we did Miss Carsonby's bracelet, sir?"

"We?" Peter raised his eyebrows. "Really, Postlewaite—I!"

"I beg pardon, sir. But you have been so kind—in Miss Carsonby's case and in protecting me in this. It was a slip of the tongue."

"Exactly," said Peter impatiently. "For a time he was lost in thought."

"After all," he remarked, "I suppose the easiest way is the simplest. It isn't usual to trust valuable gems to the uncertainties of the mail, but we—that is, you, Postlewaite—must take no personal risk. I will address these packages for you and you must drop them into the post-office."

And really, he concluded, he must see Postlewaite out of this. Afterward, he would take steps to safeguard the invaluable against these extraordinary attacks. He would keep him at home. No entreaty would cause him to swerve. Postlewaite's days of being loaned were over.

So Peter's simple plan went into

effect and Postlewaite departed with a light heart. In all charity, it is hoped that his heart was light since his conscience could not have been. For six weeks afterward Postlewaite left the service of Peter, against all entreaty, to sail over the seas. There came a time in every normal man's life, said Postlewaite, when it was no longer natural, or scriptural, to live alone. And there awaited him—and, it appeared, had awaited him all along—a divinity in the land of his nativity. And he was very sorry to go—very sorry indeed, sir.

Once since Peter has seen Postlewaite. He glimpsed him in a carriage in Rome two years after this, and Postlewaite appeared portly, prosperous and contented. Possibly he was doing the world, as was Peter. For Peter had become quite a traveler.

It would have pleased him if Postlewaite's carriage had stopped. He had something to say to the invaluable, something that would have relieved him. "For," thought Peter, "there goes a man who cost me thousands of dollars, once on a time——"

And his memory went back to the day that Snifely, the Tinkerton, called with certain addresses cut from certain wrappers on certain packages and asked him if he recognized the handwriting. And he recalled Snifely's wonder story of the thief who had gained access to the best houses through being a valet for a gentleman who was accommodating, and who had made a pot of money through a system that was most unusual. Results were always successful, for the system included not only the theft of diamonds in necklaces, brooches and pins, but the substitution of bogus gems for the originals through a rascally confederate who was an expert lapidarist. And when the lapidarist had removed the real stones and replaced them with so much crystal, the ornaments were returned to their owners in a mysterious manner. Snifely called it the cleverest swindle he had known in his

professional career, since the thieves had operated in a set that had no reason to doubt the genuineness of the gems that had been returned, even though marveling at the method.

"And if it hadn't been for a man from Chicago," Snifely told Peter, "the deception would never have become known—and, for that matter, I don't know that it is known very generally now. But the Chicago man, he got hard up, and when he found his blazer was a two-spot in a pawnshop he just looked us up and—well, we've been investigating, Mr. Vanthorpe, just where we dropped off when Mrs. Carton told us to because her guests had received their diamonds back through the mails. And we've found that a lot of people in New York are wearing imitation diamonds, although they don't know it. And the handwriting on the wrappers—"

Peter understood. He thanked heaven he was a very rich man. He knew that the Tinkertons never slept, and all that. And, of course, there was no necessity for stirring up a mess with Postlewaite safely out of

the country. But Snifely would surely understand his, Peter's, situation, and jolly embarrassing it was. If it could be arranged for the Chicago man to accept a lump sum of the value of the original diamond—now that would be something. And if Mrs. Jenkinson could be induced to part with her famous tiara and necklace which had been greatly admired by an unknown connoisseur, that would be more. Again, this unknown had a fancy for a bracelet worn by Miss Carsonby, a brooch owned by Miss Gadsby and a certain stick-pin and diamond ring. With a proper commission, Mr. Snifely might know how to arrange these matters. Of course, when Peter addressed the wrappers he had no idea—

Mr. Snifely was human. The transactions took time, and Miss Carsonby absolutely refused to surrender the bracelet, which was a family heirloom. In the end, however, she came to share Peter's secret, since she is now Mrs. Vanthorpe—and no longer wears the ornament she was wont to display.



A FRIEND IN NEED

DECEMBER 1, 1904.

EDITOR *Sunny Smile*,
DEAR SIR:

I trust that in the kindness of your heart you will accept the inclosed manuscript. Its acceptance means much to me, as I am the sole support of a bed-ridden mother-in-law, and my resources are exhausted. If I do not sell the story she will starve.

Yours very truly,

JOHN J. JONES.

JANUARY 1, 1905.

EDITOR *Sunny Smile*,

UNKNOWN, BUT DEAR FRIEND:

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for declining my manuscript. My mother-in-law starved.

Yours in eternal gratitude,

JOHN J. JONES.

ACROSS THE COURTYARD.

By Bliss Carman

THAT is the window over there
With the closed shutters and the air
Of a deserted place, like those
Abandoned homesteads whose repose
Haunts us with mystery. Inside
Who knows what tragedy may hide?

This window has been sealed up so
A fortnight now. A month ago
Just about dusk you should have seen
The vision I saw smile and lean
From that same window. Spring's return,
When daffodils and jonquils burn
Under the azure April day,
Is not more lovely nor more gay.

The world—at least, our artist world
Where tubes are pinched and brushes twirled
In the long task to reproduce
God's masterpieces for man's use—
Knows Jacynth for the loveliest
Of all its models and the best.
Why, half the portraits in the town,
From Mrs. Bigwig, Jr.'s down,
Have that same perfect taper hand,
(If you have wit to understand
A woman's vanity, you know
Why they should wish to have it so),
Those same long fingers smooth and round,
Faultless as petals, and not found
Twice in a generation. Well,
They're Jacynth's. But you need not tell
The trick. In this world art must live
On what the world's caprice will give.

Delightful folly! But far more
Delightful beauty we adore
And follow humbly day by day,
Her difficult, enchanted way.
(Dear beauty, still beyond the reach
Of paint, or music, or of speech!)
We toil and triumph and despair,
Then on a morn look up, and there

THE SMART SET

Some girl goes by, or there's a dash
Of color on the clouds—a flash
Of inspiration caught between
Chinks in the workshop's gray routine;
One hint of glory through the murk,
And God has criticized our work.

So we plod on, and so one day
It happened toward the end of May,
When the long twilight comes, and when
Our northern orchards bloom again—
Even our poor old courtyard tree,
Knowing the time that bids him be
One of the hosts that leaf and sing
In the revival of the spring,
Dons his green robe of joy. You know
How idle, then, a man will grow.
I had been sitting lost in thought
Of how our best dreams come to naught,
And we are left mere daubers still
For want of knowledge, lack of skill—
So many of us are, I mean!
The door was open, and the screen
And curtains turned back everywhere
For the first breath of summer air,
That came in like a wanderer
From far untroubled lands, to stir
The prints along the wall, and bring
Our dreams of greatness back with spring.

Suddenly, I looked up, aware
Before I looked, of someone there—
You know how. In the doorway stood
A tall girl dressed in black. How good
A scrap of actual beauty is,
After our unrealities!
The copper-colored hair; the glint
Of tea-rose in her throat's warm tint;
The magic and surprise that go
With level blue-gray eyes; the slow
Luxurious charm of poise and line,
Half oriental, half divine,
And altogether human. Oh,
One must have known her then, to know
How faultless beauty still transcends
The bound where faultless painting ends.
But you may gather here and there
Faint glimpses and reports of her
In the best work of all the men
Who painted her as she was then,
Splendid and wonderful. To me,
For color and for symmetry.
In her young glory there she seemed
The flame-like one of whom they dreamed

Who worshiped beauty in old days
With singleness of joy and praise;
Some great Astarte come to bless
This old world with new loveliness;
My own ideal come to life,
After the failure and the strife,
To prove I dreamed not all in vain
In poverty beside the Seine.

There came a sudden leap at heart
That made my pulses stop and start,
The surge and flood of sense that sweep
Over our nature's hidden deep,
When we look up and recognize
Our vision in an earthly guise.
Then reason must resign control
To the indubitable soul,
Put off despair, arise and dance
To the joy-music of romance.

For one great year she posed for me;
Came in and out familiarly,
And made the studio her home
Almost—not quite; for always some—
What shall I say?—reserve or pride,
Mysterious and aloof, belied
By the soft loving languorous mien,
Invested her, enthroned serene
Above importunings. Who knows,
If she had chosen as I chose—
Flung heart and head and hand away
On the great venture of a day;
Poured love and passion and romance
In the frail mold of circumstance—
Had she but dared be one of two,
We might have made the world anew!
However much it might have cost,
Who knows what good may have been lost,
What passing great reward?

One day
When work was done she turned to say
Her soft good night, and tripped down stair
With rustling skirts and her fine air
Of breeziness, humming a catch
From some street-song. I heard the latch
Click after her, and she was gone.
Next day I waited. It wore on
To afternoon, and still no sign
Of peril near this dream of mine.
A year went by, and not a word
Of the lost Jacynth could be heard.

May came again; the wind once more
Was blowing by the open door,

THE SMART SET

And I saw something over there
Across the yard that made me stare.
Strangers had recently arrived
On that third floor, and Fate contrived
One of her small dramatic scenes
Which make us wonder what life means,
And whether it is all a play
For our diversion by the way.
There at the window I caught sight
Of a girl's figure. The crisp white
Of the fresh gown passed and repassed,
Strangely familiar, till at last,
"Jacynth, of course! Who else?" I cried.
And on the instant she espied
Me watching her; quick as a flash
And smiling, ran, threw up the sash
To lean far out. "How do you do,
My friend?" "Why, Jacynth, how are you,
After this long, long time?" I said.
"Thank you, quite well." Her pretty head
Was tilted up, in every line
An old medallion rare and fine.
"Yes, it's a long time, isn't it,
Since that first day I came to sit
For your great Lilith? Tell me how
They hung it at the Fair. And now
That we are neighbors once again,
Do come to see me." It was plain
From the unwonted vanity
Of tone, as she ran on to me,
Some strange ambition, plan, or hope
Had come to give her pride new scope.
Somehow she had acquired the chill
Of worldliness; I missed the thrill
Of eager radiance she had
When we were comrades free and glad.
Some volatile and subtle trace
Of soul had vanished from her face,
Leaving the brilliancy that springs
From polished and enameled things.
The beauty of the lamp still shone
With luster, but the flame was gone.

There was so evident in her
The smug complacent character
Of prosperous security,
That when, with just a flick at me,
She added, gaily as before,
"It isn't Jacynth any more,
It's Mrs."—someone—here was I,
Too much astonished to reply,
Before she vanished. From that day
The rest is blank, think what you may.
There is her window, as you see,
Closed on a teasing mystery.

I think, as I recall her here,
 How much life means beyond the mere
 Safety, convenience, and the pose
 Respectability bestows;
 The beauty of the questing soul
 In every face, beyond control
 Is dimmed by wearing any mask
 That dull conformity may ask.
 How almost no one understands
 The unworldliness that art demands!
 How few have courage to retain
 Through years of doubtful stress and strain
 The resolute and lonely will
 To follow beauty, to fulfil
 The dreams of their prophetic youth
 And pay the utmost price of truth!
 How few have nerve enough to keep
 The trail, and thread the dark and steep
 By the lone lightning-flash that falls
 Through sullen murky intervals!
 How many faint of heart must choose
 The steady lantern for their use,
 And never, without fear of Fate
 Be daring, generous and great!

Where is she now? What sudden change
 Clouded our daydream? Love is strange!

MISTOOK HIS MEANING

JACK—That Miss Shapeleigh is a mighty good swimmer.

TOM—Yes; that's her long suit.

"Great Scott! She doesn't wear anything shorter, does she?"

DEFINITIONS

THE SIMPLE LIFE—Doing your own work.

THE STRENUOUS LIFE—Doing some other fellow's work.

THE MODERN LIFE—Getting some other fellow to do your work.

THE LATE LAMENTED "ALAS!"

IT is but seldom, nowadays, that we encounter that once familiar acquaintance, the poor old hollow-chested ejaculation, "Alas!" Not many years ago it was so popular that nearly everybody employed it more or less frequently. Indeed, some people got so in the way of using it that they did very little of anything else.

In days ago the lovelorn maiden waited long for her recreant lover, and pined slowly away, remarking "Alas!" at appropriate intervals till a short time prior to the arrival of the undertaker. Many excellent but rectangular ladies, who were afflicted with the good old long-drawn variety of consumption once so fashionable, divided their time about equally saying "Alas!" and snarling like Spitz dogs, until they finally wore out all their immediate relatives and died triumphant at green old ages, the last of their respective names. The Third Reader of our school days was literally infested with the pale lad, whose threadbare raiment and bulging brow were sadly patched but very neat and clean, who excused his inability to remain and converse with the bearded stranger by explaining that his father alas had been lost at sea and his mother alas had married again on two different occasions, and the family alas now consisted of himself, his mother, three sisters and two brothers, together with one half-sister and two half-brothers who were the fruits of his mother's second marriage, and four assorted offsprings who had been brought home by his first stepfather and left there to be cared for while he went forth to walk forevermore on the glory-lit hills of immortality, besides a bunch of triplets and one odd child, the third husband's contribution to the collection, amounting, in round numbers, to fifteen and one-half children and one and one-half grown folks, his stepfather alas having lost his leg and being but little better than half a man in various other ways; and it has kept the lad pretty tolerably busy alas to provide the various tribes and half tribes with food and raiment, especially as times were uncommonly hard alas and he could get nothing to do but odd jobs at digging cisterns. In fact, "Alas!" was used by all sorts and conditions of people and in various ways; generally by lazy folks and through the nose.

It was indicative of a supine resignation which is out of fashion today. We are more strenuous and less docile than we used to be. The sigh has to a great extent given place to the snort, and most of us prefer "Hurrah!" to "Alas!" Nowadays, when trouble comes we have no time for repining. It is no longer regarded as good sense when the fat catches fire to sigh that alas it is burning us; we find it preferable to drop it and run.

It would seem that "Alas!" lapsed into desuetude from lack of use, something after the fashion in which the tail of the prehistoric man is said to have dropped off after its utility had ended. We ceased to need "Alas!" in our business, and it went to join the Great Auk and the Noble Red Man and the duel and eloquence and croquet and the blue-glass cure and the notion that the office should seek the man, and all the other fads and excrescences that have one by one sloughed off and fallen by the wayside, as we have come along down the corridors of time.

TOM P. MORGAN.

IT is always disastrous to take out the tucks and let down the hem of an old romance.

THE AFFAIR OF THE FIRE-ESCAPE

By Anna A. Rogers

A GREAT many years ago during a convalescing winter, when my soul was groping blindly about for some middle footing between complete ecstasy and complete despair, it came to pass that the fire-escape which ran up and down the back wall of my hotel, to the right of my one west window, became the most prominent feature of my cramped life.

The doctor ordered me to sit in the sun every day as much as possible, and he wheeled the armchair close to the only window into which the afternoon sun poured.

One cannot read every waking moment of a long day, and after the maid had finished the work in my room, there was no one else to speak to till the doctor came, except, of course, the bell-boys who brought up my meals, but as far as they were concerned it was like trying to take a personal interest in a composite photograph. I thought for a long time, until Kitty enlightened me, that there must be a great many bell-boys in the hotel, for I seldom saw the same face thrice. It seems that there were only a very few, after all, changed very often. So, in a few weeks I ceased to ask their names, ceased to fee them, ceased even to greet their sullen comings and goings. Bell-boys are the mysterious little nomads of city life in the adolescent throes of future professional vagabondage.

But Kitty, the Irish maid, was my one comfort; healthy and cheery and bonny to look at, with a voice and a brogue that acted upon my sensibilities like some miraculous phylactery; but I was unfortunately entitled to her

society only once a day. However, she used to slip in with the fresh towels about four o'clock, and that was something to look forward to.

The doctor was very abusive about my being so much alone, and said something about trying to make rope out of sand. Of course I could not explain, so I used to sit looking at him in a sort of dumb entreaty, until one day the tears suddenly welled up in my eyes and then he apologized very gently, and never again referred to my loneliness.

One afternoon, to my amazement, the fire-escape landing on the level with my window bloomed forth gaily with three bunches of flowers; long-stemmed American beauty roses in a pitcher, a great bunch of golden chrysanthemums laid in a basin, and in a tiny green glass vase a bunch of lilies-of-the-valley.

I amused myself by testing my powers of imagination as to the individual odor of those three familiar flowers twenty feet away across that walled chasm of brick. The coarse, luxurious perfume of that rose fairly tickled my nostrils; the strong, healthy pungency of the chrysanthemums; and then that exquisite freshness of the evanescent odor of the tiny bell-like lilies, which escapes after one unsatisfying whiff, leaving a longing for more and more, like kisses snatched in haste.

What would the doctor have thought had he known that his eccentric patient was guilty of such reflections as these, alone up in her tiny back room—always alone!

Of course he cannot dream what I was a brief five months ago, seeing only this pasty white face dragged down at

the mouth, the poor eyes dull as a fish's after the quick panting has ceased.

How is he to know of that black disaster that came out of a radiant sky, which burned up all there was of living in me, save only a great weariness? How is he to know that slowly the tardy, terrible knowledge has come to me that I could have loved that which I discarded forever?

There should have been another Beatitude for woman: Blessed is she who knoweth not a great love, for she shall be satisfied with little, and shall know peace instead. And I thought to myself with my eyes clinging to the flowers: "A woman lives in that room over there, and perhaps it's her birthday. Three people, at least, have remembered it—three! A wealth of friendship, that." And then I remembered, with that twitch of the lips which is about all I have left of my old smile, that I too had had a birthday which had passed unnoticed a week back, and the only thing that happened to mark it was that the doctor changed my medicine! Well, this last one is much easier to take—there's something in that to be thankful for.

But her life—the happy woman's over there by the fire-escape—has affection in it—affection! After all, that is what we women in the end long for; the gentle benediction of affection. Love is an agony, it is disease—mental, physical, moral disease! Affection is love's happy convalescence, full of the tingle of health and hope and sanity. But one cannot choose; love comes unasked, unannounced, as the light comes from a distant star destined ages ago some day to reach a human eye.

Then Kitty came in and my eyes, a little hungry for companionship, followed her about—for she was the only woman I saw, since I was rude to the housekeeper. I was forced to be, as her idea of friendliness was rooted in curiosity. Kitty was a great chatter-box, and as she stood dusting my growing colony of medicine bottles, she said:

"The lady in number a hund'ed-an'-wan, along the hall here, was tuk

that sick i' the night, m'm! Sure, was yer dishturbed, m'm? The watchman wint for her fri'nd on the t'ird flure at t'ree in the marnin'. It's sorry I am, for she's a nice la-a-dy, m'm."

"So it isn't her birthday!" I cried, and Kitty turned and looked at me with puzzled eyes—Kitty often looked at me like that—and then she went on with her gossip. I heard a woman's voice only once a day, so I had not the heart to stop her, and we had so few topics in common, Kitty and I.

As I sat watching her my old wonder returned, my old admiration for these sturdy, honest girls far from their homes, fighting bravely their life-battles, mere children in years, perilously alone. What mithridate protects them, when so many of the sheltered rest of us make wrecks of our lives?

"The ould gentleman in a hund'ed-an'-siven, he that do be flyin' the para-kites from the roof on windy days an' writes grand books about 'em—now, I la've it to you, m'm, isn't that a sthrange thing for a grown man to be doin', m'm?—wull, he's that devoted to a hund'ed-an'-wan! He sint her some roses this marnin'—the lang-stimmed wans that do be costin' the most—why people be willin' to pay a dollar a fut for the stim alone is quite above me understhandin'!—an' a wee little tricksy of white wans he sint, too, m'm; not much to look at, but smellin' swate, like a baby after its bath of a marnin'. An' it was meself tuk 'em in to her, an' you'd art to see the face of her! Thim roses was pale beside it, m'm; but sure, 'twas the tup-penny-ha'penny little wans she liked the most! Mary Ann on the fust flure, she that's the langest here in the house, was tellin' me ari about it. She says there do be somethin' in the way of the weddin', for it's been goin' arn loike this for many an' many a year, m'm. An' sure she's gettin' no younger as the days go by! The watchman, he says to me, says he: 'Kitty,' says he, 'it's entiorely her fault; he can't bring her up to the p'int. There's a few shy women lift,' says he, winkin' at Mary Ann. 'Go long wid yer,' says

she, 'her troussos is under the bed in a box! It's flyin' his parakites he is, with great schames in his head for makin' the gold to spend arn her—an' she, poor thing, is gettin' ould waitin' arn him an' the schames,' says Mary Ann."

There was no stopping Kitty now, and I simply did not dare offend her—the only woman who had touched me since that night! So I closed my eyes as if I had fallen asleep in the warm sunshine, my head on the back of the chair, and she tiptoed about the room and presently went away, sighing as she gently closed the door, "Poor little cruiskeen!"

When the doctor came he shook his head as soon as he saw my face, and he began once more to use that terrible word—sanatorium. But I begged for another fortnight's respite.

The flowers on the fire-escape looked faded the next day when I got to the window. Kitty said there had been a great change for the worse in the night, and a hundred-and-one was evidently too ill to take care of the blossoms—even of the lilies-of-the-valley. I felt sure of that, even before Kitty told me.

After I had had my nap, I crept over to the window again, and found that the faded flowers were gone and in their place a fresh bunch of lilies-of-the-valley. And I felt once more in accord with poor, erring, love-craving human nature, as I wondered if these too came from the old experimenter in aerostatics.

After that, day after day, I found on the fire-escape that fresh bouquet of lilies-of-the-valley. And it came convincingly to me that they stood for a man's helpless remorse, a dull masculine imagination harping in despair on one string.

And my heart went out to him and I knew that I, above all people, understood: he had sacrificed love to a chimera, and the terror that it was too late was upon him. And I envied him the privilege of that daily gift of white fragrance.

Then one morning another change

came. Kitty did not have to tell me, it was all there on the fire-escape, and I had but to divide the curtains and read the bulletin.

The flowers, faded or fresh, were alike swept away, and in their places were covered dishes, a bottle of milk, a glass of jelly with the round of paper partly cut, as if an effort had been made to tempt a feverish palate. I could see by the color that it was quince jelly, clear and beautiful as amber. It had been hastily placed below the window-sill out of sight, and soon out of recollection.

It was too late for flowers; the ugly, sordid fight was on between life and death—flowers only come at the beginning of an illness, and once more—at the end.

The careless way that the dishes were covered told the tale of an untrained hand, perhaps that of the willing but ignorant friend on the "t'ird flure."

Two days later there was another change, and again I told Kitty before she told me the sad meaning of it. The slackly covered dishes on the fire-escape were gone—all but the little glass of jelly hidden under the sill—and only a carefully sealed bottle of milk and a covered bowl of cracked ice were out on the fire-escape—a trained nurse had taken charge of the case. Flowers and friends and sentiment were barred out—it was the last round of the battle—to the death, this time—among paid professionals.

Once I saw the nurse's arms reach out for the bowl of ice. Strong, clean hands they were, the white sleeves rolled up to the elbow, and then she rapidly closed the window and disappeared. Snow had fallen; and then it had turned very cold, Kitty said. I did not know, for I never left my room—and she covered me up with blankets on the bed on sweeping days.

Then one day I was strangely moved by the sight of a man's face looking out from a window directly opposite mine, across the shaft. An old face, very white, and pinched and weary.

As I watched, my heart began to

beat in great thumps, and when Kitty came I said as quietly as I could:

"Where is a hundred-and-seven? On your floor?"

She was beside me instantly and swept back my sheltering curtain from across the window, and then shrinking back, she said what I knew she would say:

"Sure it's himself, m'm, acrost there! Look at the face uv 'im, an' the heart clane gone out uv 'im! The nurse is after tellin' me that it's 'pull Dick, pull devil,' says she to me, an' a shmile on the face uv her. Devil a bit do they care, m'm, the loike o' that!"

I was terribly moved and excited by this strange, close contact with nameless lives about me. Some of the ice around my own heart began to melt away, thrills ran through me as it must in springtime in the brown, dead twigs of a tree. Perhaps some day my leafage would return to me! Perhaps it was just a winter sleep with me, too—the good sap would run again in my veins! Ah, if I could but feel alive again, could cry heartbrokenly over the affair of the fire-escape; could laugh—laugh aloud at Kitty's brogue!

The doctor said the next day I had a degree of fever; I had been doing too much.

"Too much!" I fairly laughed at him and he looked at me in a startled way, just as Kitty does. He had been attending me for four months and he had never before heard me laugh.

I did not get as far as the window for three days after that. I have only a vague memory of those days. It seemed to me the doctor was there oftener than usual, and Kitty was very slow with her chamber-work. Several times I had an uncomfortable feeling of having listened to much talking, hour after hour. Could it have been the echo of my own voice! I was afraid to look into the doctor's eyes lest I should read my story there, so I laid with my face to the wall when he came; and then he went; I had only the ceaseless passing and repassing of the Elevated trains for company. They were two squares away, and I counted

between the trains breathlessly, and marveled that there were no more collisions, so dangerous were the variations in that thundering rhythm. Finally, to get away from this teasing obsession, I crawled up and put on my Japanese wadded wrapper that is Kitty's delight, and I crept over to my chair and huddled down among the soft wraps and cushions. Pushing aside the lace curtain, I peeped out.

My first glance was at the patch of sky, blue, opaque, with never a cloud to serve as a measure of distance. My second glance was at the fire-escape. Surely she was better, the place was packed with flowers once more! White roses and lilies and violets and ferns, long sprays of English ivy—what a pretty thought that was, to bring the world of green to shut-in eyes tired of walls and ceiling!

Then as I looked fear came slowly curling into my heart, as the fog does in at an open window. There was something different about all those flowers, arranged with a strange conventional stiffness. Surely the calla lilies were tied with—there was no doubt of it—broad white ribbon! The window was wide open—the affair of the fire-escape had ended! The fight was over, sentiment was once more allowed its helpless, foolish way with the dead.

I started up, overwhelmed with emotion, and sweeping the curtain further back, my eyes darted to the window opposite—the window of one-hundred-and-seven. A gray head was bowed on the window-sill, the face hidden in tense hands. And my spirit greeted his spirit, as must two souls in purgatory for the same sin.

As the curtain fell from my trembling hand, I caught sight of one of those trivial things that fasten themselves upon the biggest emotional moments. The little glass of jelly was still undiscovered on the fire-escape under the projecting sill; the circle of brown paper, still hinging on a little glue, was flapping about in the breeze; bobbing and nodding merrily, and then I began to laugh aloud. I do not

remember anything more till I found myself on the lounge, and heard Kitty sniffing beside me on her knees; the doctor in a chair on the other side, his fingers on my wrist.

All the dulness in my heart was gone, I was alive again, the old abnormal sensitiveness tingling through me. I could feel the bell-boy's eyes peering in at the door-crack, the housekeeper's sharp ones above his; and the first thing I said was:

"Close the door!"

I never could bear that housekeeper—never! It had come back to me, all my old trouble in some capacity to hate roundly. And to love soundly—had that also returned?

I looked at the doctor's gravely excited face, and then I beckoned him down to my pillow and whispered:

"Send Kitty away." I never could have said it to her myself, the fear was always present that she would not come again. I smiled at her as she arose, and I held out my hand and said:

"Kitty, you'll come in again by and bye? Please do, there's a good girl. I get so lonely, you know."

As she closed the door I cried to the doctor:

"Did I talk the other day in that fever?"

"Yes."

"What do you know of my story?"

"Practically nothing that I did not know before—that you were in a woman's mood which would change some day; has it come?"

I stared at him a moment, and then I struggled up on my pillows excitedly, the madness of long repression giving way to the madness of expression.

"Yes, doctor, it has come! I have been in a casing of ice all these months, and it has broken away. That woman's death in there—in the other room; that man's remorse! The love of living has come back to me; the love of loving, the very love of suffering—anything, rather than to be left alone in a room with the window wide open, with white lilies in my hands. I want to live—and I will take what goes with living!"

June 1905

"We thought to keep it from you—I gave stringent orders—I am sorry."

"Sorry? Ah, no, doctor—her death has been my rebirth. How strangely our lives are interlaced—psychically, I mean. She never heard of me and I never saw her, and yet—surely 'the secret things belong unto the Lord!'"

And then that fraud of a doctor sat there and listened to my story, and at the end took down an address, and all the time he knew it—every word of it!—knew that I had thrown aside a man's great love for what I called art; that early in the autumn the night came that was to justify me in my own eyes, and in the world's and in his; the night of my test; the packed house, the great orchestra behind me—for it was in the largest concert hall in the city—the blaze of light falling like sunshine on the flower-garden of the women's gowns beneath. All eyes and ears were mine if I did but satisfy them, all hearts mine if I did but thrill them with my voice.

And all in my white velvet and pearls, my head erect, every fibre in me sure of success, I went forth to my triumph. Those who loved me were there, faint with excitement, and he was there, sitting close to the stage. I first felt and then saw him—his face like wax, his eyes like stars—and then I failed!—hopelessly, utterly, irretrievably failed, and blackness came, and only sense enough left to deceive them all and fly through the night to this refuge where I have hidden from the world in one of the many hotels of this same great city; a little back room that looked out on a fire-escape.

The doctor had sat with his face turned away listening in silence. At the end of my story he faced me, and then I saw it all instantly; and after that he could do nothing with me. I sprang up, seized his arm and shook it, frantic with excitement.

"You know it—I did talk in the fever! There's no surprise in your eyes—you're too honest for the role, doctor! You have been to him. Tell me, has he forgiven me? Does he care a little yet? Tell me quickly."

"My poor child—my poor child!" was all the doctor had a chance to say over and over again—trying in vain to quiet me. And then someone knocked, and the doctor placed me on the lounge and went to the door, opened it, and stepped outside.

When he re-entered I watched him in dull amazement which turned to wrath as he gathered up his overcoat, his hat, his gloves in complete silence, and then approached me. A flash of temper ran through me—there was no doubt my old tumultuous self was fast returning!

"Are you going to leave me like this, without one word, alone?" I cried.

"You are not going to be left alone,"

he said standing, smiling down at me; "he's broken his promise—I wouldn't give a sixpence for a man who'd keep it! He says he will not wait another minute—he's—" The doctor pointed toward the door, his eyes full of mischief. And then I knew all I wanted to know, and the first thing I did was to put my hands up to my disheveled head, and the first thing I said was:

"Doctor, I must have either Kitty or a hand-glass!" I can hear his laugh yet as he exclaimed:

"You shall have both!" And then he went out, and a little later Kitty went too; and then the other came in, and a great peace with him.



MAY FLOWERS

MAY flowers on the city street—
A keen-faced vender sells, with eyes
Fitted for coarser merchandise
Than these pathetic bits of sweet
That breathe of vague simplicities.

May flowers on the city street—
Here where the tide of traffic roars
Against its narrow, crowded shores
Where men go by with hurrying feet
And barter swings its thousand doors.

May flowers on the city street—
Why, 'tis as though the young-eyed spring
Herself had come—an artless thing,
A country lass demure and neat,
To smile upon us, wondering.

May flowers on the city street—
Pink and white poetry abloom
Here in this clamor, crush and gloom—
A home thought in the battle's heat,
A love song in a sunless room.

May flowers on the city street—
For one poor coin, behold! I buy
Springtime and youth and poetry,
E'en in this sordid mart unmeet,
So many miles from Arcady.

THEODOSIA GARRISON.

THE ENDING OF THE PLAY

By Henry Sydnor Harrison

AS an illustration of the queer way in which surprising results occasionally spring out of the most trifling of incidents, Gordon, the playwright, sometimes related how it was that the most notable idea of his life, and one which he afterward adapted with distinguished success, came to him directly as the result of a broken car-coupler. But for this little accident, so annoying at the moment, it seems certain that he would never have been thrown into conversation with the remarkable old gentleman from whom he had the story; and as the man died only a few weeks later, in a strait-jacket and with three attendants on his chest, it was not to be expected that the opportunity for an exchange of ideas would ever have offered itself again.

It all happened naturally enough at the time, and Gordon, of course, never realized that he was sliding into anything unusual. Thanks to the fractured coupler, the train lay over just short of two hours in Washington, and, as though disheartened by this setback, lost time all along the line. In Atlanta the following evening it missed its connection by an hour, and was callously sided for a long wait. To make matters as bad as possible, it was raining cats and dogs outside; and the handful of passengers, balancing the choice of evils, flattened their noses disconsolately against the black panes, through which the yard lights twinkled damply, and decided to remain within. In time the three men on board, exhausting other solaces, drifted inevitably to the smoking-room, where one of them, a genial drummer, following the law of

his kind, immediately tapped a bottomless well of anecdote and personal reminiscence.

Gordon, the least difficult of men, listened idly, with perfunctory comment. The drummer was obviously a good-hearted fellow, endowed with a kindly and open nature; but his conversation, considered as an intellectual stimulus, was not noteworthy. Besides, Gordon's attention had almost instantly fixed itself upon the third member of the little party, the strange old man whom later events were to impress indelibly upon his memory. Lying back in the solitary chair, plainly in the densest abstraction, he was, indeed, a man to catch anyone's eye. His deeply cut face gave him the air of looking older, perhaps, than he really was; but at least he was somewhere past sixty—tall, handsome in a heavy sort of way, with a drooping white mustache and restless, wild eyes. His skin had the sallow tint of a morphine eater, and his hands trembled. In his face there was something indefinable, fleeting, nameless, some queer trick of expression that eluded Gordon's analysis, which somehow stamped him as a man apart. His motions were cat-like, lightning-swift. Once he lighted a cigar; and he went through the simple operation in a premeditated, staccato sort of way, almost as though he feared that unless he kept his mind on it, and hurried, he might forget how it was done. For all the consciousness he exhibited of the drummer's vivacious presence, or of Gordon's, he might have had the little compartment all to himself.

Gordon, who was younger and more impressionable then, and always a close

observer of men, watched him narrowly. He had a feeling that no man could look and act in so queer a way without causes based upon strange experience; and it was, he used to explain, with the vague hope of somehow drawing him out that he suffered himself presently to be thrust into the role of chief conversationalist, and to guide the current of talk away from the inconsequential banalities of the commercial tourist.

This was when the drummer, skimming lightly over the range of modern conversational topics, touched in due time upon current drama, and went on to describe at some length the "show" he had just seen in Washington. The play, as it chanced, was one of Gordon's, and when this fact somehow came out in the course of conversation, the drummer's surprise and delight over the happy coincidence knew no bounds. Realizing that he was in the presence of quite a famous man, whose name had long been familiar to him, the drummer's yarn-spinning side was instantly retired from view; and he now sat as a disciple at Gordon's feet, as it were, imbibing wisdom and plying him with admiring questions. Gordon was a good talker, now with a listener at least appreciative; and this, together with the fact that the abstracted old man, with the first mention of the stage, seemed to show evidences of an awakening interest, led him to talk a good deal more freely than was his wont. The drummer was rapt, respectful.

"Mr. Gordon," he said at length, "what do you consider the most remarkable play you ever saw?"

Gordon, after a few preliminaries, told him the story of "Love After Life," that weird drama by the half-demented Polish girl, Nina Hortsky, which had been produced in private four years before, presented twice, and then suddenly withdrawn. Unquestionably, as all those who saw it testified, it was a remarkable play. The action, briefly told, centered about a young poet who turns his back on the rustic maiden whom he loves, in order to be free for an alliance that would net him the

money and ease of living which he thinks to be chiefly necessary to his happiness. In a distant city he marries a woman of wealth and high position, who opportunely dies, leaving him everything. Happiness is not for him, however. Prolonged, if ineffectual, remorse over his treatment of his early love has disordered the young man's mind; and to him it seems that his wife has not really died, but is still with him, in some strange way, half in spirit, half in flesh. He sees her daily across his handsome dining-table, sitting in his study-chair, lying upon his pillow. It was as though she mutely taunted him that, though indeed her money was his, it was at least never to become the plaything of another woman. Finally, mentally unbalanced and tortured beyond endurance, he determines to kill her.

"It is singular," said Gordon, "how convincing it was all made in the play. The staging was wonderful. I think that closing scene really took hold of you more than anything I ever happened to see. The man sits alone in the big library, waiting for her to come down, revolver at full cock in his hand. Night has come on, and there is no light in the room. The idea of the thing—waiting there in the dark for the dead woman—is so gruesome, you see. Suddenly, without sound of any sort, you are aware of a flutter of white in the doorway; and the man springs up, furtively, crouching like an animal. Another minute and you can just make out the figure of a woman, gliding forward, silently, very slowly. There is a blinding flash, a sharp report, and the figure falls prostrate. It's like a shock when you hear a real body of flesh and blood strike the floor. The man stands stock-still, simply dead afraid to move, dead afraid to go and see what he's shot. His man rushes in and turns on the light. I'll never forget the long sigh, like a shudder, which ran through the audience when he did it. They roll the body over till the light from the chandelier beats full upon her face, and—well, it's a hard play to understand, but it was the little country girl

that he had run away from years before. I don't know what it all meant, but it was very absorbing. The curtain went down, and it ended there."

Gordon paused. The drummer, a little lost in the story's rather mystic psychology, stared.

"You don't say!" he ejaculated, somewhat inadequately. For the larger moments of conversation his vocabulary, perhaps, fell short of a full sufficiency.

Gordon, however, did not notice. He had for some time been conscious that he had succeeded in attracting another listener, in whose possible comments he was much more keenly interested. The strange old gentleman in the armchair, he was sure, had not missed a word of his story. From the first moment that the talk had turned to the subject of remarkable plays, his wandering attention had become instantly fixed; and as Gordon's queer story progressed, his interest had gradually deepened into a curious but unmistakable excitement. Now, when it was done, he sat for a moment motionless, his heavy brows drawn into an uncertain frown, then suddenly half rose as though about to leave the room, but unexpectedly changed his mind, and resumed his seat. At Gordon, who was regarding him with almost anxious expectancy, he swiftly darted a look like a dagger.

"Sir," he began abruptly, speaking rapidly in a voice which was low and singularly impressive, "I agree with you in thinking that the story of a remarkable play—a very unusual and remarkable play. But—but—if you like to tell stories of strange plays, let me tell you that there is but one—one which transcends all others, and makes them seem like old wives' tales."

Gordon, his instinct for the unusual now thoroughly aroused, and slightly triumphant to have drawn the man into speech, recognized the necessity of proceeding carefully. "I should gladly have told of a more remarkable play," he said quietly, "but that I know of none."

"How should you!" exclaimed the old gentleman almost petulantly. "I tell you there is but one worth telling—but one. And of the three men who know that, two are dead, and one is—one is—" His voice trailed off into silence, and he stared vacantly at the dripping pane, eyebrows twitching, fingers working. "And one of them," he concluded absently, "is, we might say—myself. No matter how."

It was at this point, Gordon said afterward, that it came over him in a rush that the old gentleman, beyond question, was mentally unbalanced. Uppermost in his mind, however, even after that, was the conviction that his strange fellow-traveler had a few things stored away in his memory which it would be decidedly worth while to hear. Discreetly, Gordon jogged his straying attention.

"I am deeply interested in plays that are out of the beaten rut," he said lightly. "I wish very much that you would consent to tell us—"

"Yes, yes! Certainly! As a playwright yourself, you really ought to know it. There was this man, you see," he began in a hesitating, tentative way oddly at variance with his determined, even fiery aspect, "this man who had a special interest in—in, say, monkeys. We might call him—well—we might call him—Protheroe, just for a name, you know—"

"Protheroe!" Gordon sat up, showing his surprise despite himself. "Not Dr. Protheroe, the chimpanzee man!"

A strange look, part vexation, part cunning, shot across the other's face. "I didn't say his name was really—that. I said we might simply call him that, in order to give him some name, you know. There's a little difference there, my friend. Ah, well! it's all a long time ago. I'm afraid I can't recall it now—after all—"

Gordon, naturally not doubting that it was the real Dr. Protheroe the man had in mind, let his thoughts run swiftly back into the past. About this mysterious man he knew no more

than what the newspapers had told him at the time—which was, when boiled down to meager substance, merely that Protheroe was the owner of a remarkable chimpanzee, said to be marvelously gifted, but, like all the tribe in captivity, sullen and ferocious in the extreme. That this dangerous brute had on one occasion, years before, killed a chance caller to whom he was being exhibited, Gordon recollected quite distinctly. He remembered the clear narrative which the doctor, the sole witness of the unhappy event, had told at the inquest, and the instant and obvious verdict of the coroner's jury. The papers had featured it as a sort of modern murder of the rue Morgue. Almost immediately afterward, he believed, the animal had died or been killed; and Protheroe, who had lived alone in a remote part of the city, with no friends and no servants, had suddenly dropped from public view.

The air of mystery enveloping this strange man had piqued Gordon's curiosity at the time; and the prospect, now so oddly offered him, of learning at last the significance of it, attracted him immensely. His eye rested upon the old man in whom this hope seemed centered in a gaze so earnest as to be, in effect, a plea.

"Of course I've heard the name of Protheroe," he said slowly, "of one Protheroe, that is. Everybody has. But I know practically nothing. I never heard that there was a playwright of that name—"

"Nor did I," snapped the old man. "He was in a way the subject, not the writer, of this play as I recall it all. It's a long story, as I think I mentioned, and I've forgotten most of it. . . . How it rains! I've a good notion to go and lie down and take a little nap."

"But—" began the drummer.

Gordon motioned him sharply to be silent. "We'll be starting before very long," he said quietly. "It'll be impossible to sleep. And we ought really to bear each other company on this dreary evening. And by the

bye," he added pleasantly, struck with a sudden thought, "why not have a drink all round?"

The old man made no objection. He took Gordon's flask with alacrity, and with hands slightly shaking poured out a stiff drink in a glass borrowed from the water-cooler. Also, with a swift gesture, he dipped something round and white furtively from his waistcoat pocket. Afterward Gordon, recalling the almost instant quieting in his manner, made a no doubt accurate guess as to what that little pellet was.

"You see," the man began again rapidly, "Protheroe had the luck, good or bad, as you will, to become friends with a young writer of plays—with one Barney. No, you are not familiar with the name, because it is one that just came into my head. His real name was something different, perhaps. Barney thought he could get a play out of Protheroe—but he didn't. No, no. He's dead now, poor old Barney. The story is really a warning to playwrights—a warning to mind their own business. Because, as you will see, it was all Barney's meddlesomeness that did it. You know, my friend, that plays end in strange ways sometimes; but I think that Barney's play with Protheroe had the strangest ending that ever a play had."

And so saying, he proceeded without more ado to recount, with no little vividness and narrative skill, the story of Barney's remarkable play.

Gordon, curled back in a corner of the lounge, his eyes never leaving the speaker's face, did not feel that he had any reason to complain that his expectations had been unduly raised. Indeed, as the story progressed, he became aware that the hearing of so astonishing a story in so unexpected a way was the queerest thing that his life had so far given him. What fixed this conclusion irrevocably in his mind was the strange conviction which suddenly came to him with all the force of absolute certainty, that the wild-eyed teller of it could be no other than Protheroe himself—Protheroe

the mysterious, who had gone crazy over the death of a monkey, had come back, and was now so obviously going there again.

This surmise, to be brief, Gordon afterward succeeded in verifying, beyond reasonable doubt, at the sanatorium where the doctor, a month or two later, died. He also gathered a few additional details which had a certain illuminating value as regards a better understanding of the main narrative. The story which follows, however, is substantially as Gordon had it from Protheroe's own lips in the Atlanta station-yard that night; and it is set down here almost word for word as Gordon, in the small hours after that first night when a breathless audience had made plain how they regarded his adaptation of the idea, told it in his rooms to Harlowe Brown and me.

To Barney's lot fell a vigorous life, full of action, overrunning with color and adventure. At fifteen, his native town choked him with its narrowness, and without confiding his intention to his people he booked one morning for Valparaiso as cabin-boy on the *Cotopaxi*. For half a score of years he zig-zagged carelessly about the globe as the humor struck him, earning his bread with his hands on many seas, from the North Cape to Sydney, from Singapore to Boston, and picking up in the course of it, by the time he was five-and-twenty, a closer acquaintance with the world than most men die with. In time the home-fever caught him hard, which was a curious thing for a man who had no home; and he settled down as a writer of plays in the city which, from his boyhood, he had meant to make his home. His first play was an Indian melodrama, based on dual personality, which the public took kindly to and a great critic pronounced "the most wonderful bit of purely imaginative work done in recent years." Barney, having seen strange things in his time, knew, of course that there was little imagination in it; but he merely smiled and bided his time.

Barney was casting about for a new theme that should be queerer than his first, when he happened, by a stroke of fortune, to meet Dr. Protheroe. Protheroe was commonly dubbed an enigma. He came of a nervous, eccentric stock, with insanity tainting four generations back—four, anyway. His father's brother had died in a madhouse. So had his great-grandfather. But the doctor himself was called of sound mind, save on the subject of evolution, upon which, as the few men who had ever known him agreed, he was quite daft. It was sometimes said that he was engaged in certain experiments of great importance, as had been reported of his father and grandfather before him; but what these were, and for what, there was no man to say. Some whispered that he was working out a proof of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, but they were not very clear as to how this was to be done. Barney, scenting material in the eccentric doctor, set himself openly to the task of extracting it. Protheroe was strongly attracted by him from the first, but he did not talk readily about himself. Hints, ever gaining in strength and point, failed to elicit more than answering hints. Weeks passed, and Protheroe seemed as unmoved as Gibraltar Rock in an April shower.

In the end, however, Barney prevailed. Living alone a great deal, and much staying out of bed to dream the queerest of dreams, tend to unsettle the mind; and further, in certain temperaments, they lead very irresistibly to drink. It may be, too, that there were moments when Protheroe longed for someone to whom he could talk. Be that as it may, there came a night when, as he and Barney were hotly discussing certain aspects of the theory called Darwin's, he opened wide and his secret fell from him. "I suppose I shall be sorry in the morning, but to-night," he cried, pushing his chair from him, "tonight I feel that I must tell you."

So Barney, his faculties tensely alert, learned that Protheroe's work was noth-

ing less than a practical demonstration of the truth of evolution, by taking a monkey and making him into a man. The experiment was based on the old and somewhat bumptious theory that if nature unaided can accomplish this or that result in a given number of years, man, by noting the causes of it and skilfully concentrating them a thousandfold, can accomplish the same result in an indefinitely shorter period. His grandfather had seen the special application of this theory, and the tremendous possibilities of the idea had so fascinated him that he gave up his life to it. After a long period of continued disappointment, he had succeeded in getting hold of two chimpanzees which even the cold climate of the North could not force into consumption. Then he had really begun. At his death, he had handed down an unfinished experiment as the most priceless treasure that ever man bequeathed.

"You see the idea," said Dr. Protheroe, pacing restlessly up and down. "It is a forcing process. Man took many ages to come down from the ape, for the reason that he lacked guidance. It is well understood that in many respects the old-world chimpanzee is the intellectual superior of the lowest African or Australian savage. It is only that his parts are not developed. Briefly speaking, I am developing them, as nature did; but I am doing it infinitely more forcibly, more directly. And the result, if they live, is a foregone conclusion." He stopped beside the table and took a long pull from a tumbler half full of raw whisky. "They are now in the ninth generation," he said thickly, "and every animal has but five thousand years between himself and his father."

Barney, profoundly impressed, rose and faced him. Protheroe's absolute conviction gripped him like a vise and forced home the wild plausibility of the idea. Besides the mere wonder of it, he had a nearer and more personal interest.

"They must be pretty far along the road now—these monkeys," he urged.

Protheroe spoke slowly, almost with reluctance. "There are only three now. This damned air has killed the others. Two, both females, are at my country place on Long Island. Through lack of expert attention they have suffered a partial reversion, and I do not expect a great deal from them. But the other!" he cried in a shaking voice. "Ah, God! the other!"

"Where is he?" asked Barney.

"Here," said Protheroe, and turned away.

Barney started. He saw, however, that the doctor was very much excited and needed cautious handling. "Show him to me," he said quietly.

Protheroe did not notice him. His mind was full of the last of his monkeys. "I have been with him night and day since he was born. I have tended him as no mother ever tended her first-born. I love him as no woman was ever loved. If he should die——"

"Show him to me," said Barney more insistently.

"Think what it means!" cried Protheroe, gesturing violently with the empty bottle. "If monkeys are really men, then men are nothing but monkeys; and that will knock the bottom from under the world. It will smash the universe. The *accidence* of man! Oh, it will explode the dream of heaven, it will burst through the fear of hell. There will be no virtue and no crime, and I, who showed it all—I will be the greatest man in all the thousand worlds!"

Barney laid his hand sternly upon the doctor's shaking shoulder. "Show him to me," he commanded once more.

"No," said Dr. Protheroe.

The two men looked into each other's hot faces. Protheroe swore a great oath and flung the bottle crashingly into the fireplace. Barney, reading consent in his eyes, hooked his arm compellingly into the doctor's.

"Well, well, Barney," said Protheroe, "I am willing to trust you. But listen. If you ever reveal to a living soul what has passed between us this night, it will go hard with you. Do

not misunderstand me. I will kill you."

Barney nodded. Protheroe, with no further speech, led the way to a small extension room, three steps down from the bathroom, shut off from the passage by a wooden door and a nickel-rodded gate, both locked. The doctor flung open the outer door, and Barney, peering eagerly, could make out in the semi-darkness before him the figure of a smallish man in a light sack suit, who promptly laid aside the pipe he was smoking and rose to greet them. There was just light enough to see that he was, apparently, a negro. As for the ape, there was no sign of him. Barney turned sharply about, and found that Protheroe was watching him narrowly.

"Well?" said Barney impatiently.

"Well?" said Dr. Protheroe.

"Your keeper, I suppose. But where the deuce is the chimpanzee?"

Protheroe laughed aloud. "That is the chimpanzee," he said, sliding back the nickel gate. "Let me introduce you. . . . How are you, Gecko? I have brought you a visitor this evening. This is Mr. Edward Barney, the playwright."

The thing called Gecko made a sound in his throat that was not unlike "Good evening," and put out his long arm a little uncertainly. Barney took his hand, and felt that it was gloved.

The two figures regarded each other very intently. It was an epoch-making event in the life of each. What held Barney's attention first were the eyes, which were remarkably acute and intelligent, with just a hint, perhaps, of something else in them. The face was extraordinarily human. The hair had been shaved, away so that the skin was quite bare. The nose was insignificant; but the forehead and chin had been decidedly improved, the one being brought forward and the other back, so that the line of the profile was not at all bad. Barney decided that he had seen many a man who had more of the beast in his expression.

Protheroe, with the air of a fond father, put Gecko through some of his

accomplishments, and Barney watched, marveling. An hour sped quickly away.

"There!" said the doctor at last. "Gecko, my boy, it's time for you to go to bed."

The chimpanzee turned away at once and began to undress. After taking off his shirt he retired to the closet, whence he emerged after a minute in a suit of white pajamas. Protheroe caught Barney's eye and smiled joyfully.

"There you have it, Barney! How did Gecko know that it wasn't proper to undress before a stranger? You are the first he has ever seen." He went over to tuck the creature into bed, and, leaning over him, whispered a few words into his ear. The ape laughed outright. Barney stared at the weird scene in dazed absorption. The wonder of the thing took him by the throat, as it had Protheroe's grandfather before him.

"I have not heard Gecko laugh like that for many a day," the doctor said, when they were once more back in the study. "The great difficulty with the chimpanzee is that as he gets older he usually becomes more sullen and ferocious and less and less easy to control. The old fellows are often very dangerous."

"I know," said Barney abstractedly. "I have seen a pet orang at the Cape turn upon the sailor who owned him and fell him like a log."

"You!" exclaimed Protheroe. "What do you know of oranges?"

"I have been a sailor," said Barney quietly, "and know of many things. Look at my badge of service." He pushed back his sleeve and revealed a blue flag roughly tattooed upon the brown wrist. Then, thinking it better to have the matter frankly out between them, he looked up suddenly and met Protheroe's eye. "I want to write a play about your Gecko," he said; "writing it, of course, as a piece of pure romance."

To Barney's surprise, Protheroe received this suggestion coolly. "I don't mind your trying," he said readily

enough. "By the time you can write a play about him that anybody can act, Gecko's descendants will be ready to go to the first night. He has the mind of a man now, Barney, the mind of a man! He gets pleasure out of pictures, out of books. He likes music. He shaves himself. His manners are perfect. Some day he will talk, and then will be told the most wonderful story that ever mortal ears heard. Do you know, Barney, I have always thought that it would come suddenly. Some day something in my Gecko's head will burst, and he will be a man."

And so he babbled on like a running stream. It was long before Barney, who was not very cool himself, succeeded in persuading him to undress and go to bed.

The next day Barney began his play. At first he made no progress at all. He sketched out a new plot at each sitting, only to tear his manuscript up in disgust at the next. Then one morning, as he was forcing himself, less hopeful than ever, to bring his mind to bear upon his scattered thoughts, the idea suddenly came to him; and he saw plainly that such a story could work out in but one way. He wrote the first scene before he left his desk, and stopped then only because he felt the necessity of stimulating his thought by a visit to Protheroe's Gecko.

If Protheroe, in soberer moments, had had any twinge of regret at having given Barney leave to write his play, he very easily thrust it aside; for he was reasonably sure that it was a mad idea, and that no play could ever be written from such a theme that would stand a remote chance of being put on the stage. But as the days went by he noticed with a strange sense of foreboding the growing intimacy between Barney and the chimpanzee, which he himself had authorized and made possible. Two or three hours out of every twenty-four Barney spent in the little extension beyond the bathroom. It smote his heart to see the vigorous, intelligent creature that was so near

a man sit there helpless, or pace restlessly up and down his narrow floor, day after day, waiting only for time to pass. It seemed such a useless sort of existence for the finest brute in creation. Barney pondered much and wrote and rewrote much. Gecko was his constant inspiration. Weeks passed and the play grew steadily.

"Protheroe," said Barney, one evening, "it's my belief that poor fellow hates you."

The doctor's face flushed angrily. This was an idea that had come to him unbidden many times of late.

"See here," he said bluntly; "don't make me sorry I ever showed him to you."

"But he does," repeated Barney coolly. "I have watched him so long that I can tell what he thinks about, and I know. I am so sure of this feeling that I am going to base the dénouement of my play upon it. Professor Schwanthaler, who has bred up a chimpanzee more wonderful even than Gecko, discovers that his creature loathes him, and, in a passion, kills him."

Dr. Protheroe snorted with contempt. "Jackass!" he sneered. "To make a man destroy with his own hand what he has given up his life to produce. As if personal feelings had anything to do with it!"

But Barney, who knew that the doctor was necessary to him just now, would not be dragged into a quarrel. "That is just what Hogan says," he observed, choking back his anger; "but all the same he thinks he will want the play. Did I tell you? He has read two acts and says it is so crazy that if it misses getting hissed off the stage, it will be the greatest play in years."

Protheroe sat dumfounded. The idea that anybody would take Barney's play seriously had scarcely entered his mind. He saw clearly that the effect of the play would be the virtual betrayal of his secret to the world; and he felt that he had somehow been tricked.

"But it won't miss it!" he shouted excitedly. "When your actor comes out rigged up as a monkey the audi-

ence will rise up and hoot him into the wings. It's too contemptibly farcical, Barney, too damned preposterous——"

"The strange thing about it," said Barney, quite unmoved, "is that the audience will never be able to make up their minds until the very end whether they have been looking at man or beast. That is one of the elements of strength in the play, I think. . . .

However, you will be able to judge for yourself when it's put on." And this was all that he could be got to say, though the doctor showered him with sarcasm until he was tired.

Protheroe's pride, or his obstinacy, was too invincible to allow him, after giving Barney permission to go ahead with his play, to beg him now to withdraw it; and he had, besides, the idea that it would be no use to do so. But from that night he sought by every means that his ingenuity could suggest to badger him into abandoning the idea as visionary and absurd. The matter of make-up, for one thing, he was always insisting, presented insuperable difficulties.

But Barney could not be budged. On the contrary, his confidence waxed stronger with each passing day. The play, at last being almost done, he could afford to speak plainly, and he cursed the doctor for a wrong-headed fool. So the quarrel grew very bitter between them.

One day, a little later, something happened which seemed, at the moment, destined to clear away all difficulties. Protheroe had noticed for some time that the chimpanzee was steadily growing more moody and sullen, and less and less amenable to persuasion or command. It took all his powers of reason and self-restraint to force the ape through the daily exercises in which he had once shown such interest and desire to improve. One afternoon the doctor questioned him about this, for the hundredth time, and received the greatest surprise of his life.

Protheroe had been drinking hard more or less all day, but he always insisted that his head was perfectly clear,

and that there was no possibility of his having been mistaken. He went into Gecko's room about dusk to talk with him for awhile before dinner, and found the ape with his head bowed upon his arms, shaken with sobs.

"Why, Gecko," he said, in pained surprise, "what's the matter?"

"I wish I was dead," said Gecko quite distinctly.

Protheroe had been so long looking forward to the day when his chimpanzee would speak to him that he was not conscious of any great surprise; but he realized that his own conduct was a matter of most critical importance.

"Why do you feel that way about it, my boy?" he asked very gently. In spite of his strong effort to be quite calm there was a slight hitch in his voice. The chimpanzee looked at him with curious, startled eyes. "Why do you wish you were dead, Gecko?" asked the doctor once more.

This question, in various forms, Protheroe repeated for something more than half an hour, wheedling and coaxing and commanding until his patience was worn to shreds. But all to no purpose; Gecko's silence remained impenetrable, beyond his reach. At length the doctor, bursting with rage and disappointment, lost all control of himself, and leaning swiftly forward, with the back of his open hand struck the ape sharply between the eyes. Gecko sprang fiercely up with a quick exclamation of anger, and Protheroe for the moment expected to be struck down, as the sailor at the Cape had been struck down. But Gecko, though with blazing eyes, only brushed by him, and started an endless pacing of his little room.

Protheroe recalled poignantly that it was the first time in all Gecko's life that he had ever been struck. "It is all Barney," he said as he flung remorsefully out of the room. "Barney—I must find a way to stop him, somehow."

But Barney did not come in, and he passed a miserable evening.

Barney finished his play some time

in the early gray of a March morning, and that evening, as they had long ago planned, the two men dined together in a private room at the Players' Club. Barney had promised that he would then tell in detail the story of his play. Gecko's few spoken words had done much to relieve the tension between the two men; and that evening, after a good deal of wine, their spirits ran high.

"Ah, Protheroe," said Barney, when they were left alone with their cigars, "I may be the greatest playwright of my time, but surely you can spare me that; for you, if all goes well, should be the greatest man of every time."

Dr. Protheroe, while he might, entered into the spirit of the happy occasion. "Barney," he said cordially, "you are a good fellow, and at heart, as I hope you know, I'm fonder of you than any man living, except my own Gecko. I tell you this now, because in a minute or so I suppose I shall fall foul of you, and then it will be too late. But I want you to know it, and whatever I say or do, always to remember it. And now let's have the play."

Barney, tilting his chair back against the wall, told his play at considerable length; and as he told it, the intense personal interest which it had for both of them gradually possessed their minds, quite to the exclusion of the kindly sentiments they had just reciprocated. The action of the plot extended over three years, but was very simple. It was built about an elderly professor who, after many years of experimenting, had produced an ape that was in all respects, save speech only, the equal of man. In order to preserve his line, the professor marries his pretty, silly, inordinately vain young ward. Her more or less complicated relations with two other men furnish the sub-plot. The ape gradually evinces a great fondness for the professor's wife, which she realizes and curiously fosters. The professor observes this, but offers no objections, thinking that the attachment would have an educational value for the ape. In the end, however, jealousy of his

wife's greater influence with the creature prompts him to send her away on a long visit to her mother's. Then suddenly the professor discovers that the ape hates him. In a fit of passion, his mind temporarily unbalanced by anger and wounded self-love, he shoots the ape dead, and, overcome by remorse, puts an end to his own life.

When Barney had at last come to an end Dr. Protheroe set down his glass hard, and put one question on a point that deeply interested him.

"And how," he asked shortly, "does your professor discover that his ape hates him?"

"Ah!" cried Barney in a ringing voice, "that is the great secret of my play. I cannot tell even you that just now."

At this all Protheroe's jealousy of Barney, and his old dread and hatred of the play surged in upon him and swept him off his feet. He sneered, and poured some wine. "I see," he said bitterly. "You think I will laugh at you. And so I would, I have no doubt. But I do not need that. Your whole play is one big laugh from first to last. And that fool's ending! Ha! ha! It wouldn't convince an audience of donkeys."

Long experience had taught Barney that it was idle to argue this point with Protheroe; but the play was done now, and he could at least hit back. "If you had the intelligence of a peanut," he said, his blood rising, "you would see that no other ending is conceivable. But it isn't necessary that you should see. Save your criticism for what you know something about, will you? I'm about weary of it."

"Be still!" thundered Protheroe, losing all control of himself. "It doesn't make any difference about your asinine ending, anyway. Nobody will ever hear it. The real ending will come in the first act when your hired actor comes out made up as a monkey——"

Barney raised his voice till it simply obliterated the doctor's. "Listen!" he shouted. "You talk nothing but rot—old woman's drivel. How

do you presume to know what an audience will feel? I tell you, I have designed a costume and make-up so perfect that nobody will know whether it is man or——"

"It wouldn't fool an audience of donkeys," broke in Protheroe caustically. "You had better get a professional strong man to play the part. Audiences are so apt to be unfeeling, you know. A man of weak nerve might not survive the evening."

Barney, his face flushed, leaned suddenly across the table. "There is only one man in the wide world who could play that part," he said, with tense slowness, "and I am that man. And as I shall play it, it will be the greatest part that the stage has ever seen."

Protheroe sat astounded. "You!" he cried at last, with burning scorn. "You! Who are you, pray, to talk of acting great parts?" He caught a glimpse of Barney's tattooed flag, where his cuff had been pushed back from the wrist. "Ha! ha! A cabin-boy! A deck-hand with aspirations for the stage!"

"You dare—! You'll smart for that!" cried Barney hoarsely, pushed beyond all endurance. He sprang up so quickly that Protheroe rose too, expecting a blow. "Not that—not that! But there are ways—I am going home."

"Run along," said Dr. Protheroe. "I wish to God you would. Run along home and try on your monkey-clothes."

Barney faced him with a white face. "I will make you understand," he said steadily, "that you are ignorant as hell." And then, in a minute, he was gone.

The doctor sat for a long time alone. A revulsion of feeling followed on his unnatural excitement, and he was all at once curiously depressed and despondent. In one breath, he hated Barney and loved him like a son. He told himself, in any case, that he would see him in the morning and make it all up, but this did not appear to bring him much consolation. "I have made them both hate me," he

groaned at last, rising and stretching his cramped limbs. "Both Barney and Gecko hate me." So he thought of Gecko, the Gecko who had spoken to him and would not speak again; and his anger dully rose. "I will make Gecko speak," he dimly resolved, "to-night." And he called for his hat and coat and picked his way carefully home.

When he had reached his own doorstep, however, he realized the absurdity of a visit to the chimpanzee at so late an hour; and he stumbled reluctantly up to his bedroom and began to undress. He could not free his mind, however, of moody thoughts of Gecko, and of the strange obstinacy, as it appeared, which alone now stood between him and the consummation of his highest hopes. By the time that he had got ready for bed the desire to see his creature had grown so strong within him that, almost involuntarily, he slipped back into his coat and trousers, and started for the door. "I will just take one peep at him," he whispered as he shuffled down the hall, "and Gecko will never know."

The door at the end of the passageway had been left unlocked, and Protheroe, with a curse upon Barney's wretched carelessness, softly pulled it open. There was no need for any special quietness, however, for the chimpanzee was standing, fully dressed, in the middle of the room, his arms folded upon his breast and his unfaltering gaze turned fully upon Protheroe. A dying fire burned in the grate, but apart from this the room was not lighted. Even in the half-darkness, however, Protheroe saw at a glance that the chimpanzee appeared to have undergone some subtle, indefinable change. There was an erectness in his bearing, a look in his eye, a something in his whole bearing, which seemed to be the outward evidences for some strange inward transformation. Protheroe, wondering and slightly startled, slid back the nickel gate and went in.

"Why, Gecko," he said, in aston-

ishment, "what's the matter? Why aren't you in bed?"

And the chimpanzee said, quite distinctly: "I am not in bed because I have had enough of being fooled with. I am never going to bed any more. I am never going to be a man." His voice was hoarse and guttural, and he articulated badly, but it was easy, too easy, to understand him.

Dr. Protheroe leaned heavily against the mantel and tried to steady his reeling brain.

"Gecko," he said, speaking as naturally as he could, "this is not worthy of you. You are not feeling yourself tonight. For more than fifty years I and my fathers have struggled for only this thing—that we might achieve manhood for you and your line—that we might make you men. Would you undo the work of half a century? Have I ever shown you anything but kindness and consideration?"

"Would you think it kind if I and my fathers had trapped you into the jungle and kept you there forever, trying to make you into a creature like ourselves? How do you know that I want to be a man? Do you suppose there have never been times when something in me cried out for the open heavens and the flowing water and the cocoanut palms and all those things that I should have had? I am done with your kindness. I have learned enough to know what it means to be a man, and I shall never be one. I am going away."

In the chimpanzee's tones there was so much coldness, so much unshakable resolution that Protheroe, cut to the quick, felt his self-control slipping swiftly from him. "And how," he asked, enunciating with difficulty, "do you expect to get away?"

"I shall find out the combination of the gate," said Gecko at once; "or I will overpower you some day as you are coming in. It is all one."

Protheroe was silent for a moment. "You miss the real point of the situation," he said at last slowly. "Whether you go or stay, you have become a man now, and there's an end to it.

Thank God that when the day has come for you to be working along fool's lines of your own, it is too late for them to be of any use."

"Sir," said the chimpanzee coldly, "let me tell you that the real reason of your success with us is that we have long known what you were trying to do, and have always helped you. My great-grandfather discovered the secret; my mother told it to me when I was born. How much this help amounted to, you will be able to decide for yourself; for it is now about to be withdrawn. Whether I go or stay, it is all one. If I stay you will have the chance to witness with your own eyes my gradual going back to the type of my family."

Dr. Protheroe's hand groped along the wall behind him and closed on a heavy, oddly carved Indian dagger—Barney's present—which had served him as both ornament and paper-knife. "You would thwart me?" he asked hoarsely.

"That is it," the chimpanzee answered. "Exactly. I felt that I could best work out my feeling for you by telling you clearly what I was going to do; because I want you always to know that my going back has been done purposely, and of my own free will."

Dr. Protheroe advanced three steps carefully, and stood before the chimpanzee. "And what is your feeling for me?" he demanded thickly.

"Just what you would imagine an animal would feel toward his captor; what a man would feel toward another who abused him, and was cruel to him. I hate you!"

Then there seemed to rush into Protheroe's head, as by the bursting of a dam, a flood-tide of all the passion he had ever felt or could ever feel in the world. Something roared in his ears, like the rushing of waters. Tiny flames, bright and smarting, flashed before his eyes, and these dazzled him and made his aim uncertain. But he knew that he must not wait, must not delay an instant. His right arm swung swiftly out and up and fell hard and

true. He reached the heart as accurately as he had ever done, in days gone by, on the operating-table. Protheroe got a flash of startled horror from eyes that smote him like a blow. The creature fell limply, carrying the knife with him. There was a terrible groan, like a man's, a slight convulsion through the sprawling limbs, and then—nothing.

Protheroe, suddenly ghastly sick, stared for a moment at the loved one he had murdered; and the ending of Barney's play, which he had so often derided, in a flash came back to him. He turned to the mantel and rested his head upon his arms.

"Barney was right, Barney was right," he murmured over and over, till the words lost all trace of meaning and took on a new fantastic sound.

Protheroe stood motionless, beyond thought; and downstairs the clock rang out the passing hours. Toward morning the embers in the grate fell away into ashes, and he shivered with the cold. This recalled something to his mind, and he went over to the bureau and unlocked the top drawer.

He did not remember having made up his mind to commit suicide. It was so obviously the only way out of a life that had now lost all significance that the decision seemed merely to grow up of itself. In the semi-darkness, Protheroe held the little pistol close before his eyes, tested the trigger and saw that it was loaded all round.

It was then that he first became conscious that there was a good deal of

noise coming from the direction of the closet, and it came vaguely to his mind that he had been hearing it for some time. However, there was no time to investigate it just then. Later, perhaps—another time. Protheroe raised the revolver slowly and put the muzzle between his teeth. He did not wish powder stains on his face when they found him next morning. And then the noise in the closet became so intolerable and so persistent that, apathetically, he went over and unbolted the door.

Gecko stepped swiftly out, clad in his white pajamas. The centre-table was in front of him and shut off, in part, his view of the room; but at Protheroe, through the first glimmering light of dawn, he looked wonderingly, as though for explanation.

Protheroe gazed from one to the other, from the quick to the dead, not even trying to understand. He was mad, of course; he knew now that he was perfectly mad; but what about the Thing at his foot—the Thing lying upon the floor?

Gecko touched a button on the wall, and switched on some light, plenty of light.

It fell full upon the shapeless mass by the table-leg, and lit up the smooth bronzed skin where the sleeve had been violently thrust from the wrist. It flared brightly on the wrist and on the blue flag roughly tattooed upon the forearm.

Protheroe lurched forward upon Barney's dead body.



FAR FROM IT

SHE—Was it one of those loveless marriages?

HE—Oh, no! She loved him, and he loved her money.



THE victim of circumstances is generally a willing one.

OFFICER O'LEARY AT THE CROSSING

'TIS all along Fifth avenue, as wheels the grand display
Of hansom, coach, victoria, of landau and coupé,
That like Napoleon Bonaparte reviewing his array,
Stands Officer O'Leary at the crossing.

"Whoa, there! slow there! Can't ye understand?
Dhrow back! shtop that hack whin Oi howld up me hand.
That's the way ye must obey whin th' ginerel gives command,"
Says Officer O'Leary at the crossing.

'Tis all along Fifth avenue the city orchid blooms,
The miles and miles of many styles, furs and silks and plumes;
But keen and stern, the censor of the coachmen and the grooms,
Stands Officer O'Leary at the crossing.

"Whoa, now! slow now! Put yer horse to grass!
Aisy, sure, ye fresh chafoor—don't give me anny sass!
Halt, Oi say, an' open way to let this lady pass!"
Says Officer O'Leary at the crossing.

Half a mile of millionaires along that moving chain,
Dappled grays and thoroughbreds with cropped and arching mane—
But Maggie Flynn, the milliner, need not appeal in vain
To break the grand procession at the crossing.

"Whoa, there! slow there! Don't give me anny chin!
Stiddy, sure, ye fresh chafoor, before I run yez in!
Whin Oi've me say ye'll all give way fer little Maggie Flynn,"
Says Officer O'Leary at the crossing.

WALLACE IRWIN.



A GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT

EDITH—Poor Pauline! She was lost at sea.

LENA—Oh, isn't that dreadful! And she so much wanted to be cremated.



THE IDEAL GIRL

"IS she one of those horrible girls who know enough to set men right?"
"No; she's one of those delightful girls who know enough not to."



THE ART OF GIVING GRAND OPERA

By Heinrich Conried

I DEAL opera in New York is impossible under existing conditions. By general acclaim the opera given at the Metropolitan Opera House is, in the matter of the singers, superior to that of any opera house in the world. The greatest singers that are available I gather here to satisfy the discriminating public. Salaries that are reasonable and unreasonable are paid to these artists, the highest amounts paid to any singers the world over; for when an artist leaves his native haunts to come to America his scale of prices is immediately multiplied by two, three or four. A singer who appears quite willingly at an opera house, say, of Munich or Berlin, for thirty thousand marks a season demands of me a hundred thousand marks for three months' work—and expects to be coaxed to come. In addition to this effort I must turn politician or even diplomat to secure a leave of absence for this singer from his royal patron.

But all this is a part of the great game of grand opera—a game at which numberless impresarios have sacrificed health and fortune. The difficulties of putting through a season of opera are enormous. They tax the ingenuity, patience and skill of the most experienced manager; and beside them the troubles of my fellow theatrical managers are puny. But if the director of the Metropolitan opera enterprise is afflicted with artistic ideals then he is wellnigh engulfed by the difficulties that beset him.

When I assumed this position two seasons ago it was with the firm deter-

mination to give opera as New York never before had seen it. I had raised the standard of the Irving Place Theatre to a plane of artistic excellence that has been heralded abroad, and I fondly believed that the same would be possible at the Metropolitan Opera House. When I examined the condition of this latter house critically I could scarcely believe my senses. A primitive system of stage-lighting, a stage that was technically almost useless because it was insufficiently equipped with traps and other mechanical devices, the entire cavity under the stage stuffed with old scenery—these were a few of the conditions that greeted me on my first route to idealism. But what startled me more than anything else was to find an opera house, so modern and magnificent as this one, devoid of any single room designed for rehearsing!

The installation of a modern system of electric lighting, the rebuilding of the stage, the enlarging of the space of the orchestra—these improvements were immediately undertaken, and the ensuing changes somewhat helped matters. The fact that the renovated opera house was turned over to me only three days before my first season in it began, is something that passes the credulity of the foreign impresarios. Yet, that is what happened, and my first season at the Metropolitan was a managerial nightmare and is, fortunately, a thing of the past.

I then instituted a lot of necessary reforms, and began the second season, which concluded quite differently from the previous one. It was this second

season, just concluded, the most successful one the Metropolitan Opera House ever has had, financially; and artistically I was happily able to show a great improvement over former productions in this theatre. But it is still a long way off from the opera that I dream about giving, and which I can give if conditions can be changed.

In the first place the stage of this opera house is absolutely inadequate. There is no place here to store scenery, which essential commodity is kept in three great warehouses in the neighborhood. This involves a tremendous amount of handling and hauling which is ruinous to scenery, is vastly expensive and makes a scenically successful performance a matter of sheer chance. For instance, at a matinee last winter "Parsifal" was produced. The performance concluded at five o'clock, at which time a horde of men was turned loose to take the vast amount of "Parsifal" scenery, the great panoramas and the innumerable drops, out of the opera house to place them temporarily on the sidewalk, to bring in the equally elaborate scenery of "La Gioconda," and prepare that for action for the performance which began at eight o'clock that evening. This production of "La Gioconda" concluded at midnight, at which hour another shift of hands dragged the "La Gioconda" scenery out of the building, loaded it on trucks and distributed it to the warehouses. Then commenced the bringing in of the scenery of "Götterdämmerung," which was finally in the house by ten o'clock the following morning. I called a scenic rehearsal of "Götterdämmerung" at ten that morning, and rehearsed until one. At half-past one the performance of "Götterdämmerung" began!

Now, the men who adjusted the sixty-four drop-pieces of this last set of scenery are not the same ones who handled it during the performance; and as the stage hands have but a short time in which to acquaint themselves with the hanging of the new scenery it is only reasonable to excuse

some slight slip in the various transformations which have to be made according to a schedule that is dictated to a second by the music. So the fact remains that if a performance of any work at the Metropolitan Opera House turns out scenically well it is a matter of sheer luck or accident—possibly both.

The best stage-manager in the world can help me but little so long as there are not opportunities for rehearsing the scenery thoroughly just before the performance; and there can be no talk of time for rehearsals so long as I am compelled to give as many performances each week as are now demanded. A performance on each of the first five days of the week, two on Saturday and a concert on Sunday night sum up a weekly list that is not equaled by the busiest great opera houses of Europe; and to continue this for a season of fifteen or seventeen weeks is a strain that is not appreciated by the multitude which sits on the other side of the curtain and admires or criticizes.

In my first season I anxiously tried to impress the seal of great musical authority on the Wagner operas performed at the Metropolitan Opera House by bringing over Felix Mottl, the celebrated Bayreuth and Munich conductor. Mottl realized in the first week that the conditions surrounding the production of grand opera at the Metropolitan Opera House were insurmountable barriers, and frankly said so. He concluded that the only way possible was to submit to these conditions, which he did, with results that were not artistically gratifying to either of us. Instead of dictating the details, Mottl found here that the various intricate circumstances about him dictated to him; and he had either to submit or not conduct at all. So he chose the former although I doubt that he is anxious ever to return here again so long as these conditions prevail and dominate.

Now, if I attempt to bring over some other of the famous conductors—and there are very few available—they will stipulate conditions that I cannot possi-

bly promise to fulfil. For instance, von Schuch, the celebrated conductor of the Dresden Royal Opera, demands that he have, say, three rehearsals for a Sunday night concert. That is absolutely impossible here, for I cannot spare my stage for so long a time, and there is no other room for rehearsal in this building. Suppose he were to ask for even three rehearsals of a work that he is conducting for the first time here—"Lohengrin" or "Tannhäuser"—I could not persuade the principal singers to attend these rehearsals. Were I to approach Madame Eames or Madame Nordica with a request to attend three rehearsals of "Lohengrin" either of them would laugh me to scorn, for one of these rehearsals must surely conflict with the singer's public appearance. So von Schuch's experience would probably be a duplicate of Mottl's last season. He would doubtless fulfil his contract, doing the best possible under the circumstances, and then depart with the consoling final remark that the conditions in New York are such that to give ideal grand opera is out of the question.

The audiences here are hopelessly accustomed to star casts, and this demand makes it almost impossible to give perfect ensemble opera. I cannot persuade the great singers to arrive here sufficiently in advance of the beginning of the season to go through the ordeal of rehearsals that are so necessary to perfect opera. They are the world's greatest singers, and their singing services are of such value that they must reduce the time of rehearsing to a minimum.

Then, too, arises the difficulty of satisfying the four sets of subscribers. These purchasers of season tickets for Monday, Wednesday, Friday nights and Saturday matinee must be treated as much alike as possible. Each wishes to hear his share of the repertory, as well as his quota of the principal singers. Now, I must guarantee my principal singers so many appearances during the season, must arrange the singing schedule of each one so that the required number of days elapses be-

tween each appearance, to give the singer an opportunity to recover voice and strength; and yet I must see to it that the various sets of subscribers hear each singer equally often! So my opera repertory is designed by hard and set rules, the casts of which are made up by ledger, so to speak.

In addition to this I must consider the request that a majority of subscribers, on certain nights, do not crave Wagner operas; therefore I must provide Italian or French forms of operatic amusement for them. Even if every detail goes through, according to the complicated schedule prepared, it involves a colossal amount of labor and patience; but it never goes quite smoothly. Sickness and sudden indispositions are among the habits of every operatic family, and the whims of a single prima donna may upset the arrangements of a whole week of opera. Then, resulting from such an unhelped-for event, when a change becomes necessary it is in most cases a thankless, begging task to find substitutes at the eleventh hour. Few prima donnas of first rank and salary will appear in the place of a whimsical sister if the name of the one to be substituted has not been effectively blazed from billboards and newspapers on the morning of the performance.

It seems to take vanity, voice, temperament and brains to make a great singer; and these qualities are so seldom distributed in equal proportion. This whole community of men and women associated with grand opera, from the fabulously paid singer down to the most humbly placed chorister, is a sensitively equipped lot. The petty wranglings of the minor ones and the haughty differences of the operatically mighty ones all help to complicate the vast system of operating. Discipline is a difficult quality to instil; and here, in its stead, proud independence stalks frankly about. Contentions of the various labor unions must be met, as well as the grievances of individuals—all of which are conditions that are unknown in European opera houses, where military

precision and discipline prevail, to the eternal benefit of the artistic value of the performances.

Because of the enormous box-office receipts at the Metropolitan Opera House, it is believed that even the impossible can be accomplished here, on account of the money available. While it is true that a vast sum is taken in during a short season, on the other hand, the expenditures are proportionately as vast. The absolute renovation of the stage at the beginning of my term here made it necessary to start with a huge deficit; so now a great share of the profits is directed toward wiping out at least a portion of that deficit. And those who note my enormous receipts with envy scarcely stop to realize that the weekly cost of giving opera at the Metropolitan varies from fifty thousand to sixty thousand dollars. And if a New York season has been brought to a successful termination, there still stares me in the face the possibility of a loss on the road tour.

The latter has become a necessity because of the long term of engagements that I must offer the great artists in order to persuade them to come over here at all. Nor does it seem quite possible that I can ever extend my New York season to ample length so that all travel may be unnecessary, for opera here is largely a matter of social importance, and when the social season is at an end public interest in opera seems also to wane. One of my fondest dreams is that I may be allowed to concentrate all my energies upon giving opera only in New York, and to this end I have extended the coming season a fortnight, planning to save myself at least the long trip into the far West.

If I achieve this saving it will be one move nearer my goal of perfect opera; then, with practically the same force of helpers engaged season after season I am hoping that the artistic excellence of the several stage performances may rise gradually to some plane approaching the high mark that is my conscientious artistic goal; but I

cannot promise to achieve this so long as the controlling conditions still prevail.

Ideal grand opera in New York is only possible with the aid of a subsidy. A fund of three hundred thousand dollars each season is necessary to endow the scheme of giving opera at the Metropolitan Opera House. That my sincerity in this matter be not questioned I offer to contribute my share—say, ten thousand dollars—to this fund. With such a fund in hand at the beginning of the season I would invite subscription for only four operas each week. Each one of these works would then be given ample and thorough rehearsals. Scenically the results would be perfect; and the musicians in the orchestra, not being compelled to play at eight performances each week in addition to the rehearsals even now necessary, would be free of fatigue and worry. Thus everyone concerned would be keyed up for each performance, and nothing short of ideal opera would result. Of profit there could scarcely be any possibility, but it would be the most perfect opera in the world because scenically it would be equal to the best productions abroad, and the ensemble of artists employed would be of the Metropolitan standard, which means the most famous singers to be had.

But without such a subsidy the present plan of giving opera here must continue. I cannot afford to miss giving a performance, even if the opera is not sufficiently rehearsed, because the expenses of production are so huge that I dare take no chances of losing a night's receipts. I slight no opportunity of improving the present forces employed, and I salve my artistic conscience by doing everything in my power to better the slightest detail as well as the greatest points of importance. But until the Metropolitan Opera House becomes a liberally subsidized institution the ideal opera that I would like to present to New York audiences must remain an unrealized dream, the height of my ambition.

SOUTHERN PRIDE

By Edith Rickert

IT is a curious experiment to come suddenly upon a rival in a twenty years' past love-affair, and find that the splendid youth whom you envied has become a sodden, diamond-studded wretch.

When Norris met Kingley in the Café Carondelet, his first impulse was to cry out with the Pharisee, "Lord, I thank Thee!" his second, to stand mutely aside and let the creature pass; but in the end he waited, stiff and courteous, for the other man to swagger up and patronize him. It was not so difficult to keep cool with the advantages of slim height and a reposeful manner, over the squatty and offensive dowdiness before him. Besides—and here was the great point—both had lost the girl.

They mellowed into a certain degree of amiability, if not friendliness, over absinthe and cigars. And Kingley, when he had got over his surprise that Norris had deigned to soil his feet again with Mississippi mud after treading the wonderful heights of Broadway, abounded in the news and scandal of the Crescent City. According to his version, everybody who hadn't gone to the devil already was hard on the road, and all the unlynched deserved hanging.

But throughout this gabble one name was never mentioned. Norris's questions circled nearer and nearer, poised over a word, but did not drop; and finally he was silent altogether, watching the little man before him with an intent gaze that seemed to try to force him to speak.

Kingley shuffled awhile, at last grew restless and moved to go.

"Well, Norris, you're a lucky dog—gone one better than the rest of us, you know. It takes you proud fellows to do that. Now I——"

Into the pause that followed Norris inserted a slow, "By the way——"

Kingley gaped—almost with apprehension, it seemed—then suddenly forestalled the question with a rush.

"I suppose you know that Polly Percival is keeping a boarding-house?"

Norris contemplated in silence a comic drawing on the front page of a *Figaro*. "No—I didn't know."

"Esplanade street," continued Kingley nervously. "First class. Making money—you bet."

Norris straightened his shoulders a trifle more and asked, with his eyes still bent on the inane drawing: "What's the number?"

"Forty-two bis." Then he added, with an air of buttonholing in confidence, "I go there to see her—sometimes."

"Where's Percival?" asked Norris indifferently.

"Lord! Don't you know? You *have* dropped us! He cut and run years ago—left Polly in the lurch—came back, though, now and then, and sucked up the funds. Tough customer—old Perce."

"Divorce—?" began Norris.

"So we said. She wouldn't listen—Southern pride, you know. Ah, she's a little devil of a woman herself, is Polly, as I've told her."

"What happened?" interrupted Norris brusquely.

"After nine or ten years he got D. T. and died. Considerate of him, wasn't it?"

"Very," admitted Norris, and added sarcastically: "No doubt she nursed him and forgave him on his death-bed."

"Not she. Didn't go near him. But she paid to have him looked after. That's where I helped her. Perce always had a fancy for me."

"Indeed? Ah, yes, I remember. I must be off now."

"Got anything on tomorrow? Come to the races. Some of the fellows are going to have a blow-out afterward at the St. Louis."

But his invitation was declined so curtly that he was left abashed; and when he had recovered he dropped into his chair again and lit a fresh cigar, with uncomplimentary remarks about the blighted unheavenly pride of the blazing scallawag who climbed on other people's shoulders to look down upon his betters.

The man of business who prided himself on wasting few moments awoke from a profound contemplation of a muddy gutter and wondered how long he had been standing there. Two pickaninnies angling for crayfishes in the slime grinned at his helplessness and offered for a few picayunes to show him anything in the place. And it was by following the paddling of their bare feet that he came to the wide, ostentatious street where she, Polly Sladen—no, Percival, Percival—kept boards.

He hesitated awhile at the gate, contrasting the gaudy gingerbread lattice-work of the new house with the plain, heavy columns of her old home at Chalmette. He dreaded meeting the woman. Would she have sunk, like Kingley? As he stood there with his hand on the iron gate, the sun dropped behind the magnolias and the swift chill of the December twilight crept behind him. He shivered slightly, and went in.

Yes, Mrs. Percival was at home and would see him. He had given no name; and doubtless she thought him a prospective boarder.

He waited long and in much discomfort in the luxurious, fire-lit draw-

ing-room. If it were merely that he had got into the wrong house, it would not so much matter; but these things—associated with Polly Sladen! Under the oppression of velvet carpet and velvet chairs, the glitter of marble and cut-glass pendants, the sickening fragrance of pastilles recently burned, he had a swift memory of polished wood chairs on shining floors, of long, straight curtains blowing in and out of great windows—of space and sunshine and sweet air—Chalmette as it had lived with him during the long years of his struggle into a career.

There came a rustle of silk in the open door; and he set his lips more firmly, ready for any shock that Time might have been preparing. But after all there was very little. Prim enough she looked in her black gown with its narrow bands of white at neck and wrists. The fire-glow touched her pale face and her pale hair elaborately curled and coiled. Artificial she might be—a little—but serene and remote from the vulgar room.

So much he had judged when the polite smile on her face died away, and her lips parted as in a cry, but made no sound.

He had pity of her as he seized the cold hand that she held out, rather with a gesture of pushing him away than of welcome; but in a moment she was quiet and self-contained as she greeted him, though her eyes were darkened and shining with a look of wonder.

"Perhaps we'd better have some light," she said, in a matter-of-fact tone that wavered a little toward the end.

He scarcely heeded the words, being absorbed in consideration as to how her voice—the voice that used to sing *Ave Marias* to him in the twilight—was still as sweet and yet so profoundly changed.

But when she moved toward the bell-rope, he started and stammered excuses, and drew out his own match-box. Thereupon she dropped upon a hideous brocaded sofa near the fire, exclaiming with sudden breathlessness, "Not just yet—please!"

There was a silence broken by the click of his box as he shut it. She had turned her face away from the glow, and he studied the little turquoise star in her ear.

"I can't see you very well," he demurred.

And then she made matters worse by motioning him to sit by her side, so that he could not, without pointed rudeness, look at her at all.

"Why have you come back?" she asked gently.

"Why did I ever go away?" he retorted.

"To make your fortune. And you have made it. I know—and I'm glad. But I never expected to see you here again."

"I remember making a vow never to come—when I was young," he said musingly.

"But those vows are made to be broken," she declared.

"Especially when it's profitable to do so. It was too good a case to lose—and there was some research to be done—"

"Ah!"

"But I came here to see you."

"That was kind of you. I hear you're a great man now—"

"Who told you that?"

"Well"—she seemed reluctant—"Mr. Kingley, for one."

"Kingley? Does he come here?"

"Sometimes."

There was a tramp of feet on the gallery outside; the front door opened and banged. Then came the sound of men's voices loud in dispute, and a woman's, giggling in a high, hysterical key in some attempt at making peace between them. There followed an oath, a little shriek and a stream of sharp scolding that died away up the stairs.

Norris could not refrain from turning to look at his companion. She sat erect and still, with her hands folded in her lap, but with tightly compressed lips. She began to talk nervously; but he presently fell to thinking and forgot that he was staring at her, so that he was startled when

she rose and said apologetically that she must go now; it was time to dress for dinner and it would never do to be late. "I should ask you to stop, only—"

He deliberately refused to help her out.

"Only—only our table is full, and it—it might not be pleasant for you. I—I—"

"It would inconvenience you," he said gravely, looking about for his hat.

Then her head went high. "Not in the least. I shall be delighted. Will you stay?"

He accepted promptly, wondering at himself as he did so. What concern of his how Polly Sladen managed her boarding-house?

She moved away to dress, and stopped at the door. "I hope you'll—like—my other—guests," she said, with a faint laugh.

Presently, as he sat alone in the dusky room, the outer door banged again and there was talking in the hall. Once a man's head was thrust in and instantly withdrawn; and a shrill woman's voice followed: "Who's the old boy? No, I won't hush—he is an old boy, isn't he? Oh! I shouldn't wonder—she's a sly cat, for all her airs. It's a good thing, my dear, that you showed horse-sense this one day."

Then came a rushing sound as of one person chasing another upstairs, and silence.

Red embers of pine-wood slabs turn themselves all too readily into memories and dreams. Norris was not aware that Mrs. Percival had returned until he heard her voice asking him to light up.

As he rose to do her bidding, he felt her finger-tips on his elbow.

"I hate so to have you do it," she said.

"Why?"

"I have—changed," she answered, scarcely above a whisper; "and I wish you had gone away in the dark—without seeing me."

"What does it matter? We all change," he said coldly.

She moved away then without further speech; and when he looked for her in the sudden blaze of light that made the room glare upon him like a trumpet, she was standing far away by the window, with her back half turned, taking some violets out of a bowl to fasten in her sprigged muslin gown. After a moment she turned and went toward him, thin and white-faced with a redness about the eyes that powder could not hide, with her hair plainly parted as in the old days and the blue stars gone from her ears.

"Well?" she challenged him.

"You are very pale," he commented.

"I usually rouge a little." Her lips and eyes were defiant. "One must keep up appearances when one has—guests."

"No doubt," he said absently, twirling a handful of the sickening pastilles that awaited burning, in a Japanese jar. She came suddenly close, caught them away and flung them into the embers. But before he could demand an explanation, the dinner-bell rang.

"Shall we go in?" she asked, smiling sweetly. "They'll come down when they're ready."

The dining-room was rather worse than the parlor. It glittered in a way to make the eyes blink and set the teeth on edge. Above the fireplace hung a huge stag's head with serene amber eyes staring into space above the mess of flowers, glass, silver-plate and gaudy china.

Norris glanced about with an air of severe distaste as he went through a form of introduction with the Shuttlewoods, the Donnellys, Mrs. Higgins and Mr. Oliver Fadden. They seemed to him equally vulgar; the Shuttlewoods with their robin's egg diamonds, Mrs. Donnelly with her affectation of *pince-nez*, Donnelly blurting in his gumbo, Mrs. Higgins insolent through powder and paint and false front, and the fatuous, red-nosed Oliver, who gazed openly at Mrs. Percival across the table.

And the intolerable part of it was that she—Polly Sladen—the girl who

had turned the course of his life and driven him North twenty years ago—she was affable to the creatures. She sympathized with Donnelly because he had won, and with Shuttlewood because he had lost; she admired Mrs. Donnelly's new gown and Mrs. Shuttlewood's new ring, and she inquired anxiously into Higgins's welfare—the while a muffled stamping and cursing went on overhead, as of a man in a blue rage with drink. She allowed Oliver to comment—unsnubbed—on her nun-like appearance with the straight bands of hair. She was not the old Polly Sladen; she was Percival's widow—the keeper of a boarding-house.

Norris maintained a grim silence, inwardly cursing Percival for the mischief he had done, cursing himself that pride had driven him North to make his way because he had been poor and her father had owned great lands that called for money, cursing her that she had fallen away from the high womanhood that he had known in her twenty year before. The sting of the words, "sly cat," lingered with him, and yet when he glanced at her pale, downcast face bent encouragingly upon the two little Shuttlewoods, a boy and girl who clung together consumed with shyness, he was more sorrowful than angry.

The talk was of that day's racing. Donnelly, a florid man with a barbaric mustache drooping over his turn-down collar, was for chipping in to buy fireworks in honor of the New Year; Shuttlewood, dry and anemic, observed sarcastically that he would pawn Mrs. S.'s diamonds to do so. While she was playfully making it clear to the table that his own would go first, Mrs. Donnelly wearily laid down her soup spoon.

"Is it not as you like it?" asked Mrs. Percival hastily.

"I prefer it hot—thank you," said the voice that had uttered "sly cat."

"Them that's late can't expect hot soup," put in Mrs. Shuttlewood, with vigor.

"Come, now, Maria, look out or you'll be in hot water in a minute,"

observed her melancholy husband; and, "One for you, Penelope," said he of the drooping mustache.

"I am sorry about the soup," said Mrs. Percival in a low voice. "I'll ask Jasper to——"

"Oh, it doesn't matter; it's too peppery, anyway. It's such an art—making gumbo."

"Peppery?" sniffed Mrs. Shuttlewood. "Are you sure the taste of it isn't in your own mouth, Mrs. D.?"

Dagger glances flashed across the table, while Mrs. Percival continued in a low, shamed voice: "Next time I'll ask cook to take yours out before she seasons the rest."

The muffled sounds overhead grew into a stampede.

"Poor Dick!" said Mrs. Higgins plaintively. "He's been waiting all this while for his dinner, I know. I can't see why—when we pay for service—Oliver, do go up and quiet him, will you?"

The red-nosed youth arose, lurching a little. "What's the good havin' a sister?" he chuckled, and stopped at Mrs. Percival's side a moment, even laying his hand on her shoulder as he stooped and whispered in her ear.

Her face flamed, but she did not withdraw—not even when Shuttlewood and Donnelly roared together at the picture of the sentimental cub scarcely able to stand for liquor.

When the waves of talk had broken over the table again Mrs. Percival leaned forward and said almost stealthily to Norris: "I'm sorry that you won't see Mrs. Pole. She's my companion—away just now." She knew that his cold eyes were asking, "Why make matters worse by trying to lie?"

For the rest of the dinner she sat silent, crumbling a bit of bread and smiling only when specially addressed.

And when at last Donnelly had dragged Shuttlewood off to buy Roman candles and "nigger-chasers" to make the children and themselves merry, and Mrs. Percival had promised to mix punch for them all at midnight to drink in the New Year, she

and her guest were left alone among the coffee-cups.

"Well," she defied him as he sat staring at a grease spot near Donnelly's place, "I hope you liked it—and us?"

"Come out into the open," he answered. "I'm choking here."

And when they stood together on the gallery, in the still moonlight, with the faint odor of sweet olive all about them, he asked painfully—almost groaned:

"What on earth does it mean?"

"Mean?" she asked. "It means that people change—a little—in twenty years. Can't you realize that?"

He plucked and ruthlessly tore to bits a spray of the fragrant blossoms that touched his hand.

"You are not the Polly I once knew," he said.

"Oh, no!" she laughed again. "The girl was sold—with the old house at Chalmette."

"To Percival?"

"We won't speak of him—please."

"Why did I ever go North?" He seemed hardly aware that he had spoken.

"Because you were proud, of course," she said lightly, and added, after a pause: "And now that you have seen, don't trouble to be polite. Besides, I must be ready soon for punch—and—and fireworks."

"Why do you burn pastilles in—in there?" he demanded. He could not call that place her home.

"Why, because—because—perhaps because I am proud, too," she answered irrelevantly, as it seemed.

"Do you like living this way?" he demanded again.

"Yes," she answered, without a flicker of the eyelids.

"And those—people? And this—place?"

"Very much." Her glance was a challenge, and she smiled faintly.

And yet for all her directness, even with the persistent memory of Mrs. Donnelly's sneer, he had a sudden overmastering impulse to save her from herself—to take her away—for

THE SMART SET

the sake of the little Polly of long ago who had loved all things good and beautiful.

"You are content, then?" he asked again breathlessly.

"Oh, quite."

Yet he would not give up. "As an old friend—may I ask—happy?"

Her eyes wavered a little. "How could I be more so—unless—unless I married—you said you saw him today—Mr. Kingley?"

He burned with sudden rage at the thought that she, too, was growing vulgar—all the world had grown vulgar. And then, to his intense amazement, he found that the flame had burned up his pride; he found himself pleading brokenly:

"Come away—North—with me—Polly."

There was a pause during which a shaky tenor began caroling somewhere upstairs:

"Oh, give me a girl—and a glass of champagne—a glass and a—a girl—I'll—I'll—never go—go—go—go—home from Dick—Dixie—a—gug—gain—I'll never—"

Then Polly turned her eyes straight upon him. "No—thank you," she said sweetly.

"Is that all? Not a word——?"

"Good night." She held out her hand. "Ah, here come the 'nigger-chasers.' Good night, Mr. Norris. I hope you'll have a pleasant journey."

He stood alone on the shell walk under the magnolias—dismissed.

And yet like a foolish boy he hung over the iron gate and watched the fireworks on the lawn—listened vainly for her voice among the babble and laughter of those she called her guests. And presently, when the garden was left to the moonlight, and lamps gleamed out above with a glimpse of little Shuttlewoods being put to bed, he drew out his watch and wondered why he was waiting. She must be mixing the punch, then; in ten minutes she would be drinking with that rabble, and he was powerless to stop it. He might have stopped her marrying Percival—twenty years ago—but

he went North to make a fortune because he would not ask her to be poor with him. Well—she was not poor now.

He was roused by the clink of iron and perceived a woman, with a traveling-bag set on the pavement, struggling with the rusty latch. He must have jammed it as he went out.

She started back as he emerged from the shadow to her assistance, then gave a little cry and spoke his name.

"You don't know me?" she asked. "I was Miss Polly's governess at Chalmette; Mrs. Pole—now—don't you remember?"

She had not lied, then.

"Ah, we've both seen trouble since then," she continued. "You are coming in?"

He shook his head, unable at the moment to speak.

"It's an unearthly hour to arrive—but I've been staying with my sister, and I promised to be home by New Year's if I could. Our train was three hours late; but the electric cars are quite safe. I don't like to leave her long with those—those people."

"Why does she keep them?" he flashed into the midst of her inconsequences.

"Why?"—she was as quick as he—"for the money. Not a penny left—not a man to support her—that's what the war did for her. And Percival a gambler! Oh, do you ask *why*?" The woman seemed on the verge of tears.

"But why not have refined people?" he insisted. "Why just these——?"

"To keep off the worse—oh, you don't know. She's had worse. These pay. And they're only vulgar. Who comes to New Orleans—except for the races? Why, she's—she nearly lost everything at first, trying to keep up the old way. And now—now she pleases them very well—the house is furnished to their taste—and the money——"

"Yes—the money?" he cried fiercely.

"She paid the last of his creditors—Percival's—three months ago, and when she has paid for the furniture in the house now——"

But he was halfway up the shell walk, had flung through the screen door and straight into the dining-room, where she was bending over the punch-bowl and Donnelly was tasting.

He saw no one but herself as he said, in a tone that would take no refusal, "I must see you at once; it's important."

He held the door open, waiting, with his eyes on the floor. A moment she glanced about bewildered at the coarse, grinning faces; then she put her hand up to her forehead and passed out before him.

He did not speak until they were on the gallery again.

"You will tell all those people to go tomorrow," he said.

She looked at him wonderingly.

"And you will let Mrs. Pole manage the auction. We shall take the ninety-two train Saturday night."

"Mrs. Pole?" she echoed faintly.

"She has returned—gone upstairs just now. I have been talking with her."

She flushed deeply and moved away several steps, turning her back on him, as if to go in.

"I have been a fool these twenty years," he began.

"Then it's rather late to take up a new profession," she assented, with light bitterness.

"Tomorrow begins the New Year."

"Well, what of it?" She did not turn.

"You will help me."

"Indeed?"

"Polly—don't be so—proud."

She faced him then, smiling a little.

"I?" she said gently. "I—proud?"

He knew that he deserved it, and the knowledge made him fierce. She did not resist—not even when he kissed her forehead, her cheek—but she turned her face into the shadow, and he heard the word *punch* in her murmur.

"Not you," he said. "You are at my bidding now. I'll go in, if necessary; but they won't like the punch."

It was long before he could get her face to the light again.

"Well, look at the old woman, then," said the voice of Polly Sladen, of Chalmette.

"She's come back—bless her!" he ejaculated. "I knew she would; but I hardly expected it so soon. I can make the old woman young, Polly—this way—and this—and this. What made you act so, Polly?"

"What made you?" she retorted.

"You would have let me go back without a sign?"

"You would have gone!"

"Ah, we're both to blame," he admitted. "Which of the seven deadly sins is it?"

"We needn't give it a name now," she said and added, in a whisper, "I'd rather say—David."

And at that very moment the bells of the cathedral began to ring in the New Year.



AN EXPLANATION

SHE—Did your friend inherit his taste for liquor?

HE—No; he acquired it. His wife married him because he didn't drink.



IT is a pity that when people reach the age of discretion they do not stay there.

THE WOMAN WITH THE REINS

YOU take your course with careless rein
 And airy hand through park and square—
 Too well you know the paths of pain!

And who would dream you could disdain
 Life's curb and bondage, smiling there?
 You take your course with careless rein.

Who guesses at Love's broken chain
 And blood-flecked bit, from your light air?
 Too well you know the paths of pain!

Your laughing lips not once complain
 Of each old pang you used to bear—
 You take your course with careless rein.

Nor shall men see Love's fire again
 Beneath your smile so debonair—
 Too well you know the paths of pain!

So, hot, rebellious heart, remain
 Still glad and smiling to their stare,
 And take your course with careless rein—
 Too well you know the paths of pain!

ARTHUR STRINGER.

THE IDEA!

MARJORIE—Dolly and her mother are often mistaken for sisters.

MADGE—Did Dolly tell you so?

"No; her mother did."

"THEY say she suffers a great deal from nervousness."

"Perhaps she does, but she doesn't suffer nearly so much as those who have to live with her."

THE PROFESSOR AND THE BURGLAR

By Harry Arthur Thompson

"DANNY!" called Mrs. Martin from the combination dining-room and nursery.

The stout man in the bedroom grunted as he stooped to thrust into the farther end of the closet a small parcel that he had taken from his overcoat pocket.

"Da-a-an-ny!"

Mr. Martin threw some old clothes over the package, ambled ponderously to the open door and disclosed to his wife a countenance which, though pleasant on ordinary occasions, now reflected no little perturbation.

"Wotcha want?" he demanded.

"Danny, you just mind Archibald while I run over to Mis' Walton's."

"Well, be back soon; I got to go out."

"Wotcha goin' out at this time of night for?" Mrs. Martin asked.

Dan transferred his weight first to one foot, then to the other; with his forefinger he scratched himself on the cheek under the ear. Then he said shortly and with rising color, "Business."

"Do you mean a job?" she asked eagerly.

"Somethin' of that sort," he replied evasively.

"Well, the Lord knows it's time," was Mrs. Martin's pious comment. "It's been eight weeks sence you lost your job at the factory, and what money we got left Archibald could hold in his little hand. Is it night-watchman's work?"

"Somethin' of that sort." This after a meditative pause and another scratch. "Yes, there's some watchin' about it."

"Somethin' of that sort!" mimicked Mrs. Martin. "Can't you give a plain answer to a plain question? What's the matter with you? The Lord knows night-watchin' ain't no disgrace, and in some ways it's a blessin'; 'spesh'ly your bein' home in the daytime and helpin' with the baby. I'll say one thing for you, even if it does make you conceity—you're mighty handy with Archibald."

Danny grinned sheepishly at the compliment and waved a large deprecatory hand. Then with an effort of will he forced himself to the point of repartee and said, "Tut, tut!"

"But you are handy," reiterated Mrs. Martin. "Now, they's some men jest as helpless with babies as kittens; afraid of droppin' them and not knowin' the difference between colic and plain teethin'. But I guess your bein' home all day makes it different; I've learned you a lot and you've learned a lot yourself."

"Sorter seems like you're givin' me a character as nuss-gal, Sally," Dan retorted. "All I need is a cap and apron."

"G'long with your jokes, Danny," said Mrs. Martin, smiling. "And, Danny, I do hope it is a job," laying a tremulous hand on his arm. "You're sober and honest and—and you've been a good husband to me." Her voice quavered a little and the tears were perilously near her eyes. Then she threw a shawl over her head and went out.

Going into the bedroom, Danny raised a window and peered cautiously out. Satisfying himself that his wife had gone down the street he closed

the sash, went to the closet, took out the package and laid it upon the bed.

"Sober and honest!" he muttered, untying the string. "And out of work two months and can't get a job! It's jest as Bill Trickey says, 'Them as has gits, and them as hasn't gits it in the neck.' I'd rather have a good, steady job at night-watchin'; it's safer and comfortabler. But what's the use? Bill's right," he soliloquized, opening the package; "the world owes you a livin'." These rich corporations and the big trusts—they're all thieves with their watered stock and their bribery and their grindin' down us workin' people. 'Big thieves,' says Bill, 'big and smart—smart enough to keep on the right side of the jail.'

"Sober and honest! Oh, Lord!" He was spreading out on the bed the contents of the package. "'Here's a job that's easy,' says Bill; 'light work, genteel and refined. No experience necessary and no references required.'

"'But is it honest?'" says I to Bill.

"'Honest?'" says Bill. "What's that got to do with it? Who's honest nowadays? Don't you ever read the magazines?" Bill always was a reader and the greatest feller for arguin' and makin' black look white."

By this time there was disclosed on the bed a small electric lantern, a black mask, a glass-cutter, a ball of putty and a bunch of keys.

"Bill didn't say nothin' about the mask," Dan remarked; "but I best take it along, anyway—I'd hate to get recognized." And then a profound sigh escaped his lips. "Somehow er other, I don't like it, gallivantin' around o' nights at my age, burglarin'. It don't seem strictly honest, even if Bill did prove it was."

At this moment there smote on the stillness of the night a querulous wail. Hastily gathering together the various implements of his new profession Dan wrapped them together, and after placing the package in the hall closet tipped his ponderous bulk to the crib-side of the infant Archibald.

Immersed in an occupation wherein

he stood on firm ground, all his hesitation vanished. Swiftly he passed to the kitchen, filled a pan with hot water, set in it a bowl of milk and retraced his steps to the crib.

In the kitchen he transferred the warm milk to a bottle. As the rubber mouthpiece touched young Archibald's lips a howl was arrested at its period of crescendo and there followed a grunt of satisfied desire, succeeded by a silence of pure content, broken now and then by a gentle gurgle.

Dan gazed at his son, his face beaming with foolish fatherly pride. Then he said softly:

"I got to do it. That kid must be taken care of."

A neighboring clock droned off eleven strokes that night as a ponderous figure made its way through the shadows toward the more aristocratic part of town.

II

PROFESSOR TOMPKINS—or, to give him his full name as it appeared in the college catalogue, Helmholtz Kant Tompkins, Ph.D.—told the story on himself; told it with that sheepish, deprecatory smile of his that had disarmed so many enemies and won so many friends: that once when he had gone to his room to prepare for a journey to New York he found himself at the last stage of his preparations for the trip arrayed in his pajamas and about to crawl into bed. One-half of society merely chuckled over this absent-minded side of the gentle professor; the other half respected his scholarship and read with admiration, if not with understanding, his latest book, "The Psychology of Adolescence."

Therefore, society was divided in its attitude toward a much discussed wedding. Part of it wondered why a girl of Grace Carlton's social promise should have married such a dry-as-dust scholar; the other part expressed, with a disregard for reticence, its amazement that a man of Professor Tompkins's profound learning should so handicap his future by marrying such a

frivolous young person as Miss Carlton. Inasmuch as after three years of the experiment Professor and Mrs. Tompkins smiled amiably at the world, lovingly at each other and ecstatically at their son, aged nine months, society shelved the *mésalliance* with other unsolved social puzzles, and dutifully left the customary number of cards at the Tompkins door.

Three years under the same roof with an extremely alive young woman had added to Professor Tompkins's material comfort, the while they discovered, to his amazement, the widening scope of the special branch of science to which he had devoted his life. To write with authority upon the subject of infant phenomena when one has no infant phenomenon in the house had seemed merely a part of the day's work. Now that there was an adolescent mind at hand for scientific study, and a young, but opinionated mother nearby to prick the bubble of theory with the scorn of practical knowledge, Professor Tompkins's dogmatism was fast giving way to a tentative and bewildered state of mind.

He had observed in Mrs. Tompkins not even a dormant interest in infant psychology; yet when the wonderful miracle was accomplished, the young mother proceeded to assume the care of her offspring with an assurance that was amazing. She seemed no more dismayed by lack of previous thought and study to qualify for the functions of maternal care than she was staggered by its tremendous responsibilities. Calmly she washed, fed and dressed the boy with all the insouciance of a girl with her dolls. A few hours' reading of the best text-books—and somehow she seemed to know the best intuitively—and she had absorbed, as a sponge does water, the necessary essentials. In four weeks she discovered evidences of amazing ignorance on the part of the trained nurse; in six, she was instructing the attending physician.

One afternoon this wonderful mother observed to Professor Tompkins: "Look, he's smiling at you!"

"My dear," was the answer in a precise tone, "the accumulated data resulting from the scientific study of infant phenomena leads conclusively to the opinion that a child of his age does not really smile. It is a reflex action of the risible muscles induced by some slight—er—colicky condition," he finished lamely.

"Risible reflex fiddlesticks!" Mrs. Tompkins retorted.

On another occasion:

"What do you think? The boy said 'dada' today. He pronounced it quite distinctly."

"It is quite beyond the limits of credulity to believe that the normal child of his age recognizes the paternal relation, although there are, of course, certain well-known recorded observations of infant precocity," replied the professor. "The vocal utterance to which you refer is, I believe, generally regarded as an inarticulate expression due to a pleasurable sensation of the cerebral molecules occasioned by the stimulation of the optic nerve."

"Nonsense! If you heard him say 'dada' you'd know he meant you."

"But, my dear, there is a finality about these results of scientific observation that we cannot question. Allowances must be made for maternal enthusiasm."

It was outraged motherhood that flashed back at him:

"With all your book knowledge"—there was a slight emphasis on the word book that was almost tantamount to a sneer—"I believe that if you were left alone with that blessed boy and had to take care of him you would be as helpless as he."

A few hours later Professor Tompkins closed a book of reference, using his finger as a book-mark, and lifted a pair of pale blue eyes, into which he vainly endeavored to recall a look of interest, to Mrs. Tompkins, who was insisting on some comprehension of her parting instructions.

"The baby is not likely to awaken," she was saying, "but if he does Katy will look after him. I shall take Alice

with me, as I may not be home until late."

"Is Mrs. Morgan critically ill?" he questioned.

"It isn't Margaret who is ill," she patiently explained; "it's her baby. And the baby would be all right, I am sure, if Margaret only would be firm and use common sense. She started in wrong. She should have trained the baby from the very beginning; they soon learn. I suppose every time she cries Margaret takes her up and feeds her."

"Really?" he remarked conversationally.

"Yes, and last week when I was there Margaret was actually rocking that child. I am not at all surprised to get her note asking me how I trained my baby. I could write her, I suppose, but I think it better to talk it over with her and find out just what she's been doing. Good night, dear."

"Good night, my love," the professor remarked, his thoughts immersed in his next book.

Later in the evening he was annoyed by the timid entrance of Katy, who explained that her sister was ill and "could she go and sit up with her, and she would be back by eleven, sure, sir."

He absently accorded the desired permission with a vague sense of thankfulness over an undisturbed evening.

It was nearly midnight when he was interrupted by a persistent and distracting noise. He frowned, listened a moment, and then returned to his writing. Again he was disturbed by the insistent cry. It clamored at his brain, beating down the orderly process of reasoning. Opening the window he cried "Scat!" and resumed his writing. But in vain; the cry routed every thought. It grew more clamorous; its wailing crescendo, a hauntingly familiar note, burst in upon his struggling memory.

"Bless me," he cried, "it's the baby!"

As the waves of memory lapped in Professor Tompkins was conscious of a feeling of increasing dismay. It gath-

ered substantial form as he remembered Mrs. Tompkins's absence. The maid had gone out and he had not heard her return. Irritated, he rang for her. The wail of the infant, increasing in volume, its dominant motif the anger of outraged resentment, was the only response.

Sighing, he lighted a candle and ascended to the nursery. His hair, red as to the face, moist with exudations from tear duct, nasal and salivary glands, greeted the parental entrance with a howl that suggested the opening of the full organ-stop as the congregation files out of church. Had Professor Tompkins possessed his wife's ear, trained to the nice interpretation of every modulation of their son's voice, he would have detected in the infant's cry a distinct note of triumph over a partial victory.

Shading the candle behind a propped-up book on the table, the professor approached the crib and surveyed the joy of his life and the disturber of his peace.

"Bless me!" he said helplessly.

At which young Tompkins stiffened his legs, arched his chest and emitted a yell that made his previous efforts seem, by comparison, the work of a novice.

Vaguely the professor remembered that there was something said about taking up a child when it cried. What Mrs. Tompkins really said was that the modern and, therefore, the correct method of training was *not* to take it up. It was to his credit that he remembered so much of his wife's instruction.

Accordingly, he lifted the infant gingerly and fearfully, at a loss to determine whether he would drop it before it broke in two or whether it would break in two before he dropped it. Then, in the flush of his first success he transgressed rule number two of modern infant training by seating himself in the rocking-chair and rocking the baby to the accompaniment of a crooning melody, which surprised the child no less by virtue of its novelty than it amazed the father to find that he remembered the song. It was a relic of his college days; he recalled that

as a freshman he had been taught to sing it, standing on one foot, by some visiting, though uninvited, sophomores. Professor Tompkins's colleagues might have been shocked had they heard him gravely announce:

"Forty-nine blue bottles were hanging on the wall,
Forty-nine blue bottles were hanging on the wall.

Take one blue bottle down
From off the oaken wall,
And there are forty-eight blue bottles
a-hanging on the wall."

The second stanza recognizes the existence of only forty-eight blue bottles, which in the last line are reduced to forty-seven. But the boy seemed not to worry about the loss of a mere bottle, and enjoyed the second stanza fully as much as the first. Under the influence of this astonishing musical novelty, at the period when there were but thirty-two blue bottles pendent, the baby's eyelids fluttered and in a few moments Professor Tompkins enjoyed the triumph of a father who for the first time has put his child to sleep.

When he finally ventured to place the infant in its crib it seemed as if every fibre of the chair creaked. He had hardly risen when the child opened its eyes and began that intake of the breath which heralds the coming storm. Hastily Professor Tompkins resumed his seat, his rocking and his hypnotic song.

The vocalist had reduced the number of bottles to twenty-nine and, as an experiment, had been silent some five long minutes, of sixty long seconds each, when the door was softly opened and framed in the embrasure was the huge bulk of a strange man.

"Hush!" said the professor, raising a warning forefinger. "Don't wake the baby."

There is no room in this domestic narrative to paint the surprised emotions of these two men, for the baby, awakened by his father's voice, resumed his part of the antiphon.

"Twenty-nine blue bottles," chanted the professor, glancing reproachfully at the cause of the disturbance. Alas! The novelty of the song had worn off;

the baby opened a full-diapason stop that he had not previously deigned to touch.

"Pins, mebbe," suggested Danny Martin.

"Pins?" interrogated the professor vaguely.

"Sure," said Danny, approaching; "often it's pins."

"But where?" queried the professor during the next lull.

"Here, let me see," Danny demanded.

After an investigation, "No, it ain't pins," he said.

The psychologist looked eagerly at Danny, as if to ask for another suggestion.

"Mebbe it's colic," Danny ventured.

The father clutched at this straw. There was a reasonableness about the suggestion; he had heard of colic. Yet in another moment his hopes fell. It was a remedy that he wanted, not a diagnosis.

"But what can we do?" he asked helplessly. Already he was including Danny in his troubles.

"Here, let me take him," commanded Danny.

With a sigh of relief Professor Tompkins handed over the infant. Danny, remembering certain remedies of his own household, held the child up against his shoulder, patting him soundly on the back.

"It ain't wind," said Danny as the boy continued his howls.

Mildly supplicating help from the strange being who seemed so fertile in suggestions, Professor Tompkins interrogated:

"Do you think that the pain may be superinduced by the process of dentition?"

"Huh?" said Danny.

"The acquisition of teeth."

"Teeth, hell!" said Danny. "I'll tell you what's the matter—the kid's hungry. Here it's after twelve o'clock"—consulting a huge silver timepiece which he laboriously extracted from his pocket—"and I'll bet he hasn't been fed since six."

The psychologist beamed; such logi-

cal processes of reasoning appealed to him. His admiration for this resourceful person increased.

"Ah!" he said. "I am of the opinion that your suggestion is an eminently practical one; but the question that now confronts us is: What will he eat?"

"Eat nothin'," said Danny, with fine scorn. "It's drink he wants—milk."

"Oh, to be sure," cried the professor joyfully. "How very strange that I should have forgotten that lacteal fluid is the pabulum of infants."

Danny looked at the professor admiringly; Danny appreciated good language when he heard it.

"I wonder where the milk is kept?" queried the professor.

"In the ice-box, mebbe," replied Danny, with wasted irony.

"Oh, yes, I'll go down and get it." And he started for the door.

"Here, wait a bit," Danny commanded, suspicion in his tone. "How do I know you won't give me the double-cross?"

"I beg your pardon? I don't quite follow. The—er—double-cross?"

"Sure," said Danny. He was, helpless with the baby, whose cries had long since diminished to heartrending sobs. "You might telephone the p'lice."

"I had quite forgotten that," said Danny's host simply. "You will have to accept my word of honor. Besides"—he brightened at the suggestion—"your knowledge of infants is so profound that I should be exceedingly foolish to commit any overt act that would deprive me of your valuable assistance."

Danny gasped and gazed at the professor with mingled wonder and awe.

"Wouldn't that last crimp your hair?" he confided to the baby.

"All right," he said aloud; "you may be playin' me for a fool, but I'll take a chance. You seem on the level."

In a few moments Professor Tompkins returned with a nursing-bottle full of milk.

"I found the bottle in the kitchen," he announced triumphantly as Danny

deftly thrust the nipple into the baby's mouth. The psychologist seemed elated over his discovery. The burglar showed his appreciation of the other's distinct advance in practical knowledge by a grunt of grudging commendation. Both were beamingly awaiting some special token of gratification on the part of the infant; but that youngster, after one taste of the fluid, let forth one supreme howl of outraged babyhood.

"Bless me!" said the professor.

"I'll be damned!" said Danny. Helpless at the failure of the supreme test, he induced thought by scratching the spot under his ear, and then reached for the bottle. No sooner had his hand touched it than he glared at the professor, who shrank under the look of unutterable scorn.

"The milk's stone cold," Danny said.

"Well," the psychologist retorted, with some show of spirit, "I always drink my milk cold."

"Kids don't," said Danny. "Here, gimme that bottle. What you don't know about kids would fill a book."

It was a few minutes later that the professor and Danny left behind them in the nursery a good baby—that is, a baby asleep. In the dining-room the remains of a cold chicken were fast disappearing, and the talk was of babies—which led Danny to confession.

"On the level," he concluded, "I wasn't intendin' to burgle your house; but the open winder of your liberry looked so invitin'. The Lord knows I don't want to burgle anybody; but there's the missus and the kid, no job and hardly a dollar in the house."

"Can you drive?" asked the professor.

"Sure," said Danny.

"And do you understand anything about gardening?"

"I used to be a gardener."

"Suppose you call on me in the morning and we will arrange—"

But at this moment the dining-room door opened and in swept Mrs. Tompkins and the maid.

"I'm so sorry, dear," she said briskly, "but I simply *had* to stay with Margaret. She is *that* sick, and just from worrying—" Here Mrs. Tompkins caught sight of Danny, who was formally introduced as the new gardener. But she sped on breathlessly:

"And it's just as I thought—she has been over-feeding that child; she actually gives it its bottle at twelve o'clock every night."

"But, my dear," ventured the professor, "under some circumstances might it not be—er—er—advisable?"

"Never, under any circumstances," came the decisive answer. "If my baby wakes up at midnight I give him a few spoonfuls of water, turn him over and he falls sound asleep. He is never fed before two in the morning."

Danny arose to go, exchanging a sheepish glance with his new employer.

"Oh, is this your package?" asked Mrs. Tompkins, handing Danny a parcel.

"Yes, thank you, ma'am," said Danny. "It's jest a—a few things I haven't any further use for."



WITH A FAN THAT HE OWED HER

THE wind is ill that blows (at dances)
 No good to some poor man;
 And sending this, I thank the chances
 Which broke that other fan.
 But there's a side to every saying
 To take exception to:
 I hope the wind this sets a-playing
 May blow no ill to you.

WARWICK JAMES PRICE.



WHERE THE PROFIT COMES IN

WILLIE—I never knew but one man who ever derived any benefit from reading articles on how to succeed.

WALLACE—Indeed? I should like to know his name.

"Banks. He persisted in it until he got so he could write them himself."



JASPAR—Is T. Frenzy Rocks really rich?

JUMPUPPE—Well, no. But he at least has enough to make him dissatisfied.

BESIDE THE ROAD

FROM my still cottage, off the road,
 I see the noisy world go by,
 Forever driven by the goad,
 Forever bending to the load,
 Unmindful of the sky.

The spring is here; today I found
 A bed of golden daffodils;
 I threw them to the passing throng,
 But could not make them pause for long,
 Nor join me on the hills.

I know a bank beneath the trees,
 Where fragrant purple violets blow;
 I plucked the fairest, on my knees;
 Their tender beauty seemed to please
 Those plodding ones below.

But when I beckoned toward the wood
 They did not turn and follow me;
 Yet by their eyes I understood
 They longed to gather flowers, and would—
 If they were only free.

But oh, it is not always spring!
 Winter that smites all blossoms dead
 Will find my throng still laboring
 Toward the same hollow, nameless Thing—
 But Youth and Passion fled!

ELSA BARKER.



A NATURAL CONCLUSION

RYER—He is quite a clubman, isn't he?
 DYER—What makes you think so?
 "I've met his wife."



THE more one has his leg pulled the shorter he becomes.

THE SKELETON IN THE CLOSET

By Zillah M. Sherman

1880

AS Hiram Ruggles's square-set figure lounged up the back steps, the frying pork gave one final expiring splutter. Without some rebellious sizzling, however, it had not added to the prudent store of grease in the yellow bowl on the table. The bespattered stove testified to its leaps of resistance against the fate of diminishing to a crisp, appetizing brown.

When, with dripping face soured under the red pump on the porch, Hiram slouched into the kitchen, Mrs. Ruggles did not look up. Among the agricultural class salutations often seem superfluous. In the same skillet in which the pig, by fire, had been purified of its sputtering radicalism, in order that the concoction might be agreeably seasoned by the atmosphere of its late rich tenant, she was stirring the milk gravy. Her long face, terminating in the broad, firm jaw, framed in smooth bands of iron-gray hair, had the fixity of a countenance unaccustomed to smiles.

Mr. Ruggles stolidly arranged his wet locks before the little mirror, the crack, running diagonally across its surface, meanwhile causing it to play Puck-like freaks with his sun-cured visage. The parting in the hair secured by his efforts, if not satisfying a geometrician's ideal of a straight line, at least testified good intentions. He completed his dinner toilet by giving a twitch to the aged suspenders, the somewhat frail bond which held his blue overalls.

Hiram satisfied the first keen edge of his appetite before vouchsafing a remark of any kind. One might have

imagined these two people were performing the rites of some grim ceremonial. Finally, with a load of pork, egg and potato poised on his knife ready to be emptied into his gastronomic reservoir, he said, "Wal, I s'pose we've got to 'tend that funeral tomorrer!"

With the noise of a suction-pipe, taking a huge swallow of tea from his saucer, he glanced at the impassive face opposite. Mrs. Ruggles, apparently undisturbed by this scrutiny, poured a little more tea from the tin pot into her cup, and made no reply.

"I say," he volunteered again, "I guess we'll have to go!"

Evidently the lady of the house was not in a conversational mood. For any manifestation she gave thereof, she and the large gray cat, brushing obsequiously against her dark print gown, might have been the sole occupants of the kitchen. Her husband audibly masticated another miraculous mouthful and then continued his theme.

"It's inconvenient for me jest now," he said. "I ain't got no time to spare; but it can't be helped." Harpooning with his fork a slice of bread, he disposed of it in two excursions, and then further illumined the necessities of the case with, "Lemuel's a kind of relative, ye know, an' 'twouldn't do—'twouldn't be showing the proper respect for us not to go."

His wife changed the angle of the blue sugar-bowl and declared in a monotone, "I ain't a-goin'!"

"I s'pose folks can't help dying! I ain't got the time to spare, but we've got to go."

Mrs. Ruggles met this concession of helplessness in the presence of the great inevitable with the refrain now grown a trifle stronger, "I ain't a-goin'!"

"I guess if we start right arter dinner it'll be time 'nough."

"I ain't a-goin'!" The statement was reinforcing itself on a crescendo.

"Git my things out, Mary Ann, so's they'll be riddy for me to git right into. I'll be working up to the last minute."

"I ain't a-goin'!"

"Oh, I guess mebbe ye be." And Hiram gave a dry chuckle. Assured of his masculine citadel, not requiring the weapon of words to support its security, he was grinning at the snarling tussle which was going on between the black dog and the gray cat over a morsel he had thrown to them on the porch. The quiet woman perchance vented her irritation at this indifferent disposal of her remark by placing, with nervous energy, the cover on the sugar-bowl, as she ejaculated:

"Hiram Ruggles, mebbe ye don't know *why* I ain't a-goin'!"

Not even this ironic onslaught ruffled his placidity. His heavy jaw, in the function of mastication, moved up and down with unshaken regularity.

"I dunno as I do! An' I dunno as I keer, neither, long as ye're riddy to start arter dinner tomorrer."

Under this persistent stolidity his wife's patience was rapidly evaporating. Nervously her long fingers, with their knotted knuckles, were handling the dishes about her. Without rhyme or reason the bread changed places with the cookies, and the salt and pepper seemed to find no abiding haven of rest.

"Ye know I ain't got a rag to my back fit to be seen in—five years since I married ye! In all that time ye ain't bought a stitch of clothing for me——"

"Wal, that only proves, Mary Ann, that ye're economical. An' ye allers look nice. I don't believe in women's putting all on their backs!"

"P'r'aps ye think cloth has the staying qualities of them everlastings!" she exclaimed sarcastically.

His equanimity evidently was akin to that abiding flower of her comparison, for he had a solution ready for the possible frailty of materials.

"Hain't I told ye agin and agin that ye was welcome to all them clothes of Jennie's? Jest like new they be, too. She never hurt 'em none. Ye rec'lect, don't ye, my fust wife didn't live much more'n a year arter we married. Most of that time she was abed. She wa'n't like ye, Mary Ann. I guess ye ain't ben in bed a day all that time."

As he gave this flattering testimony to the present Mrs. Ruggles's wearing qualities, his eyes, counting-machines of the values of crops, from their narrow openings tried to flash a complimentary gleam.

"Ye know," he wandered on, "an ailing wife ain't no real helpmeet to a man. Jen cost me consid'ble for medicine. By gum, I jest bet she used five dollars' wuth of that jimcrack compound for consumption, an' it didn't do no good. Jen had to go, an' all that money was jest wasted. No," he contentedly went on, "Jen wa'n't like ye!"

To the large, angular frame of the successor of the helpless Jennie he gave the same glance of calculation with which he would have studied the merits of a plow-horse.

"But, Mary Ann, don't ye let no false scruples fere with yer wearing Jen's things. P'r'aps they be middlin' fine. Her old aunt, mebbe, was pretty extravagant an' foolish in fitting her out," with a generous wave of his horny hand, "but nothin's too good for ye. So make yerself to hum with 'em all."

"Mebbe ye calc'late I've notions of riding in a circus. Jen wasn't only 'bout a foot shorter than I be!"

Her tone was potentially quiet, and not recognizing the calm before the cyclone, and inwardly chuckling over this amicable adjustment of affairs, he responded humorously:

"I guess ye'd make 'bout as good figure as any of 'em! But piece 'em down, piece 'em down." He had tilted himself back in his chair, but suddenly

by the concentrated bitterness of Mrs. Ruggles's tone, he was startled into an upright position.

"Hiram Ruggles, I wouldn't wear Jen Truecome's clothes, not if I was to go naked to the Judgment Seat! I wouldn't wear 'em if she'd ben big as me, and not a leetle baby, as she was! I wouldn't wear 'em, big nor leetle. I wouldn't wear yer first wife's things, no, not to save yer mean soul from the damnation it deserves!"

With an impetuous violence that precipitated the pottery into a jingling agitation, she rose from the table. Her tall, angular figure for the moment seemed to have dropped its patient burden of drudgery; into her eyes had leaped a light fairly scorching his meaner vision. The instinct of womanhood, perhaps never totally blotted out in the most subdued, resigned personality, was inspiring her resistance. For the time being, upon the horizon of her simple domesticities and untrimmed sordities, she loomed a powerful figure. She was lifted from the temperate zone of the commonplace to the intensity of the torrid belt of tragedy, and with the invincibility of Fate she declared:

"Hiram Ruggles, so help me God, I'll *never* stir out this yard till I git clothes o' my own!"

To reach the phlegmatic nerve-centres of this son of the soil was no fleet journey; but that her arrows at last had sped to their destination was shown in the lines about his expansive jaw, now drawn to a brutal fixity. Over his two or three lone front teeth, that stood like weather-stained sentinels, his lips firmly closed.

"And so help me Gawd," he echoed in slow deliberation, "not a penny of *mine*—not a penny goes in wanton waste for new cloth, when there's good stuff in the house. Jestice is jestice, and women's high strikes don't 'fect me none!" Attempting a smile, which resulted in a distorted grimace disclosing the yellowed tombstones within his cavernous mouth, he added: "Wear 'em—Jen's clothes—wear 'em, I say, or indulge yer fancy of 'pearing

at the Judgment Seat in the slim attire ye mention! Rec'lect, ye might ketch cold, though!"

To his harsh tones the twittering of the birds in the June boughs seemed an incongruous accompaniment, and the breath of the roses, now and then penetrating the open windows and briefly triumphing over the culinary odors of the kitchen, seemed as the waif of dreams coquetting fleetly with grim facts. It was as though the phantom of the dead girl, Jennie Truecome, like a dim cloud, were hovering over the scene trying charitably to obscure the jagged outlines. Outside, in the caressing breeze, the branches gently waved, but within the breasts of Hiram and Mary Ruggles the icy blasts of winter tore. The obstinate vows froze into silence, and the heavy, decisive jaws were a prophecy of fulfilment.

The man passed out to his life in the field, and the woman, for awhile, stood silent and immovable, and then, leaving the table, which presented an unalluring picture of greasy plates and debris of edibles, went upstairs. She steered straight for the "spare chamber," which wore an air of tame innocence. The green shade, raised a short distance at one of the small-paned windows, welcomed a ray of sunshine that sported over the brilliant greens and pinks of a patchwork quilt covering a billowy hillock, which rose from the gaily hued valley of the rag carpet. Upon a mantel above this glowing verdure a tall china vase, brave with supernatural blue leaves and bacchanalian red petals, maintained a frigid formality with the box made of variegated shells, the sole other ornament of the citadel. Amid this aggressive glare of miscellaneous coloring the quaint old blue wash-bowl and pitcher, reposing on the primitive wooden washstand, were as restful as a memory.

Of this peaceful still-life Mary Ann soon made a disorderly medley. The closet, seized with a sudden, overpowering nausea, was vomiting forth its contents. Down upon the pro-

miscuous heap of garments, boxes and nondescript articles of ancient pedigree, thus unceremoniously emitted, George Washington, without so much as a quiver of an eyelid, gazed benignantly from a summery print of Mount Vernon.

Mrs. Ruggles did not pause in her industrious efforts at liberating this receptacle until every hook and shelf stood out in unrelieved freedom against the bare white walls. She violently shoved a small brown trunk into one corner; then, with a violence that seemed to suggest a decided *forever*, she closed the door upon it. The vibration of the slam of this potent barrier resounded through the old farmhouse. A sympathetic bang communicated itself from room to room, even down the winding staircase, and extended to the kitchen, where it disturbed the shining equilibrium of a long row of milk-pans overlapping one another in friendly intimacy. With a sound of cymbals down they clattered. This tin avalanche aroused from dreams the large gray cat which was napping on the door-sill, and away he scampered across the backyard. His sudden flurry put into a flutter a colony of hens, and soon the big black dog joined in the general confusion, evidently on the *qui vive* for any excitement to break the monotony of the day.

Mrs. Ruggles, unconscious of this chain of events animating, for the moment, the nonchalant farmyard, apparently had not given the final touch to her important function. The mild, white woodwork of the door, with its chaste, artistic lines, had an appearance of placid finality accented by the heavy, black latch. But evidently it was not going to be put upon its honor, for she attempted to turn the key in the lock under the latch. That small instrument, however, either from long disuse or from sympathy with the ostracized trunk, refused to make but half its journey. Repeated efforts proved seemingly of no avail. Finally, with one foot braced

against the base of the door, and with her countenance twisted in response to the attempt, Mrs. Ruggles gave a slow, determined push—and the refractory key was conquered. With the key in her hand she made her way through the disheveled mass of things on the floor. Her careful, housewifely instinct even ignored the elevated green shade, and the sun was permitted to take wanton sips of color from the gorgeous stripes of the floor covering.

From behind the kitchen door Mrs. Ruggles took a gingham sunbonnet, and passed out into the June sunshine. The omnipresent appetite of the hens, interpreting her approach as the signal for a banquet, advanced with clucking greed; but she went sternly on to the orchard of gnarled trunks shaded by their glorious, green umbrellas.

This world of quiet was an old story to Mary Ann. She did not know that for many a weary eye which had gazed long on bricks and mortar it would have been a perfect dream of rest just to see those foliated tops outlined against the blue depths of the sky. But she was completely absorbed in the drama going on in her heart.

Her long strides soon brought her to the old rail fence which lazily meandered along at the foot of this fruit-bearing domain. Elevating her scant calico gown, she stepped over the weather-worn barrier with masculine ease. Over the field where, under sporadic trees, cows were forming unconscious groups for the artist, she trudged to the wood beyond. Following the winding path over which the heavily laden branches formed an arch so luxuriant that the curious sun found a green peephole only here and there, she walked steadily on. A streak of brown fled up a gray trunk and hid itself in the leafy shelter; a red wing gleamed for one intoxicating moment and then melted into the greens.

When she reached the edge of a stream dreaming amid mossy clumps of low willows, like the airy foam of a green sea, she paused.

Suddenly the stream awoke from its

lulling dream. Like the involuntary start of a tired sleeper, it gave a splash that sent a pair of orioles to a sumach growth on the other side. Mrs. Ruggles's long, gaunt arm dropped to her side, and the knotted fingers no longer grimly held the key of the closet of the "spare chamber." Doubtless it had already reached the bottom, in its journey downward proving an iron disappointment to some hungry fish greeting it as a savory morsel.

The ripple died on the surface, and Mrs. Ruggles turned slowly homeward.

1900

"It beats all how this door sticks! Could it be locked, I wonder? Where's the key, anyway?"

"Mebbe it's in some of them drawers."

"I'm sure I dunno why people lock doors. It looks as if they calc'lated to lodge thieves."

And Mrs. Rattler, who had fallen heir to the property of her brother, Hiram Ruggles, upon the recent decease of himself and wife, gave a dissenting sniff. From a distant State she had come to Meadowbrook, "to see to things," and now that the last duties, "done in a respectable manner," had been performed for Hiram and Mary, with an interested neighbor she was investigating her newly acquired territory.

"Like 'nough there's valuables there," said Mrs. Cram, interrogating with eager curiosity the keyhole. "That key must be found!" An exhaustive search, ignoring no possible or impossible crevice, was made for the guard of hidden treasure.

"Mary Ann was queer, anyway!" Thus Mrs. Cram vented her chagrin as she sighingly engineered her cozy plumpness down from the top of the bureau, where she had been carefully prying for the mysterious hiding-place. "I don't see no sense in cooping yerself up to hum, as she done. I actually believe she hain't stirred a foot outside this yard for—well, mebbe all of ten

or fifteen years. Never could git her to go to meetin', nor funerals. In fact, she jest seemed to cut herself off from all social life. I used to tell her she lived like one of them hermits we read of. I done my duty, too, for I used to invite her to go with him and me, but she allers said, 'I ain't a-goin'.' She never entered into no explanations; but then, ye know, Mary Ann was a silent woman. But she was a good woman, a good worker," she added, in deference to the tradition that even that uncharitable member, the tongue, must be restrained when speaking of those who have passed beyond.

"I guess mebbe a woman living with Hiram for twenty-five years 'd learn to be silent," said Mrs. Rattler. "I ain't seen nothing much o' him of late years, but——"

"Yes, I guess Hiram was middling set in his ways."

"But there, let them as are gone and have got through their troubles rest!" advised Hiram's sister, with cheery finality. "I'm going to break the lock of this pesky door!"

A persistent application of a screw-driver, a few diplomatic strokes of her skilful, strong hands, and the lock, wrenched from its guarding duty, lay in humiliation on the floor. George Washington, as on that June day, twenty years ago, still gazed with placid dignity from the wall.

"Can't git the thing open now! Sticks like death to a—" her comparison was drowned in the puffing sigh engendered by her masterful tugging. Then a determined, steady pull, and the door on its rheumatic hinges slowly opened.

"Land sakes!" cried Mrs. Cram, peering into the depths with rapt expectation. After a quick investigation she added: "There don't seem to be nothing here but dust, spiders——"

"Bare as a convict's cell," commented Mrs. Rattler.

"Smells like a vault, don't it?" gruesomely queried Mrs. Cram.

"Don't look as though it had been cleaned in a year," commented the less imaginative Mrs. Rattler.

"I'd never credit Mary Ann's being so slack!"

"Nothing here but that little trunk. Don't s'pose there's nothing in it worth anything!" declared the new possessor, with a skeptical grunt.

"No," corroborated her companion, looking round the cobweb-decorated walls of the closet. "Mary Ann, ye know, hadn't no clothes to speak of. I hain't seen her in nothing but calico—my, I dunno since when."

"Well, I guess I know it. Didn't I have to buy a black cashmere to bury her in? She told me she didn't have nothing fit to be buried in. I told her not to worry—I'd see to all that!" said Mrs. Rattler, with the comfortable sense of the heir who has paid all due respect to the situation.

"And I jest tell ye, it done me good to see her at last comfortably dressed in her coffin. She looked real nice!" encouraged Mrs. Cram. "As for myself, I always calc'late to have one nice black dress on hand. Ye don't never know when the Destroyer——"

But this moralizing was interrupted by the opening of the trunk, for Mrs. Rattler during the activity of conversation had not been idle with her hands, and they both at once centered their attention in the possibilities of the receptacle.

"Land sakes!" exclaimed Mrs. Cram, bending over eagerly to scrutinize the discovery.

"Well, I declare!" vouchsafed Mrs. Rattler. The helpless expletive accompanied an expression of countenance suggesting the inadequacy of words; and for a few petrified moments the two women stood silently gazing down into the little hair trunk. But Mrs. Rattler's energy was not of the character to remain long stunned. Soon her exploring hands were diving among the contents.

"My, ain't there no camphor 'mong them things?" queried Mrs. Cram in cautious horror as a garment literally riddled with holes by the voraciousness of moths fell apart in Mrs. Rattler's firm grasp. As the investigation went on exclamations of amazement filled

the room. Cambric undergarments; sallow and freckled with age, bits of yellowed embroidery and lace thereon telling of dainty taste, revealed themselves. Mrs. Cram's fingers, fairly tingling with curiosity, examined faithfully the surface of each relic, speculating on every button and ornament partially spared by time.

"Ain't no good to no one now!" declared the heir, viewing this downfall with rueful gaze.

"No, I never see anything like it—never in all my born days!"

"I declare, it beats me!"

"Jest look at that! Why, this was a nice black delaine dress. See, there's a piece left by mistake, I guess, by them cannibals." Mrs. Cram fingered a shred of black cloth clinging, here and there, to the skeleton of a lining.

"Well, whatever 'twas, don't make no difference now. 'Tain't good for nothing 'cept carpet rags," declared Mrs. Rattler, with grim practicality.

"Why, I jest can't understand Mary Ann's carelessness nohow, letting good clothes go to rot!" And with arms akimbo she tried to fathom the mystery before her.

"It certainly 'pears queer!"

"Queer! Such slackness ain't commendable. Woeful waste makes woeful want. No wonder she never had no clothes to her back!"

"No, I dunno as 'tis. Mebbe, though"—and Mrs. Rattler paused in the search and looked meditatively at the branches of the apple tree against the window—"there's something here we don't understand."

"Yes, I shouldn't wonder. What does it all mean?" And Mrs. Cram's glance sought Mrs. Rattler's for some explanation of the paradox. But not even the latter's shrewd sense could solve the riddle here.

"I dunno! I simply can't make it out."

"Do ye know, it 'pears almost as if the little trunk was actually buried in that empty closet," emitted Mrs. Cram in an uncanny whisper. This interpretation was introducing a new aspect

into the situation. The waste of good material and the exclusively utilitarian view were lost sight of in the sense of mystery and awe surrounding the "spare chamber."

"No, I can't make it out!" Mrs. Rattler repeated.

"It makes a body feel that sad. For all the world, now, ain't it jest like a funeral?" Mrs. Cram's mercury of sensation had reached the point of full enjoyment in her gruesome hypothesis. Her comfortable embonpoint seemed, here and there, to fall into melancholy hollows.

"Land sakes! What's this?" Mrs. Rattler unearthed an article, its shape suggesting kinship with a coal-scuttle.

"Land o' Goshen! If that ain't one of them bunnits we used to wear years ago!" cried Mrs. Cram, with her interest returned again to earth, and her hand caressingly rubbing the dark blue silk that had defied the iconoclast, time.

"My, how funny it looks!" Mrs.

Rattler smiled as she gazed on this grotesque vision from the past.

"But jest to think of burying such a handsome bunnit! Why, when I was young I had a green silk one—rec'lect it as though it was yesterday. I paid Sally Smith—she that was Sally Jones—why, I guess it was all of three dollars."

"Well, I declare, I dunno what to make of it!" And wonder again filled the room, which kept its secret with the same inviolability as the serene smile of the Father of his Country.

"And where's the key? It's jest like resurrecting a corpse, ain't it?" queried Mrs. Cram, in a sepulchral whisper.

"Yes—where's—the—key?" voiced Mrs. Rattler, with even deeper mysteriousness, as her speculative glance followed the course of a stray sunbeam wandering over the silken tissues of the antique blue bonnet. "And what a fool Mary Ann was not to wear those clothes!"



AT THE "MUSICAL MORNINGS"

THE CRITIC—That man with the big mustache is today's soloist; and the long-haired little fellow beside him at the piano is his—

THE AMATEUR—His accomplice, I suppose?



THE CHEAPER WAY

"DIDN'T they marry rather suddenly?"

"Yes; his salary was small and they could not afford a long engagement."



AS soon as you get used to a luxury it becomes a necessity.

EARLY SUMMER

PALPITANT with light and tune
 Reigns the sweet sultana, June;
 Wilding bloom afield uncloses,
 In the musky garden, roses.

Lawny vistas, blue of skies,
 Spirit pain from aching eyes;
 There is that which soothes, composes,
 In the musky garden roses.

Like a ribbon on the sward
 Curls the river oceanward;
 Bird-songs ring in greenwood closes,
 In the musky garden, Rose's.

Shades are drawn with loving care;
 In a willow rocking-chair
 Peacefully my hostess dozes.
 In the musky garden, Rose is!

One whose passion long has burned
 (Though concealed, lest it be spurned)
 Now finds courage—and proposes—
 In the musky garden roses.

EDWARD W. BARNARD.



AFFECTED THE SECOND SITTING

HOWELL—In one of your pictures you look much more cheerful than in the other.

POWELL—Well, after sitting for the first one my eye lighted on a card which read, "Terms Cash."



SO SHE THOUGHT

PENELOPE—If I sin I don't know it.

BEATRICE—Too bad. It's a pity to be deprived of so much pleasure.

LE MARDI GRAS DE TROTT

Par André Lichtenberger

VOUS savez, Jane, c'est aujourd'hui mardi gras. Et j'irai à la matinée d'enfants de Mme Le Corbeiller; et j'aurai un costume de polichinelle jaune et rouge, bien plus beau que le polichinelle de M. Aaron; et je mangerai des masses de gâteaux; et je danserai; et je boirai du punch très fort, parce que je suis un homme; et puis...

Mais Jane dit:

— Tenez-vous donc tranquille, monsieur Trott. Je ne pourrai jamais bouillonner vos bottines.

Trott se tient coi très longtemps, trois secondes. Oh! voilà les fourmis qui reviennent; elles grimpent, elles mordillent, elles chatouillent... Pan! les petites jambes se détendent comme une paire de ressorts, à deux doigts du nez de Jane?

Jane se fâche.

— Vous allez être en retard pour le déjeuner, et il y a une dame.

Trott est poli. Il sait qu'on ne doit pas faire attendre les dames. Il fait un effort surhumain.

— Quelle dame, Jane?

— Mme de Sérigny, vous savez, la maman de la petite Suzanne, qui est morte l'année dernière.

Trott se compose un visage. Il sait qu'il faut être sérieux quand on parle de la mort. La mort, c'est quelque chose pour les grandes personnes, quelque chose de difficile. Il y a le ciel, les anges tout blancs et tout roses; les belles musiques; ça, ça n'est pas triste. Mais il y a aussi des hommes noirs, des larmes, des choses horribles. On ne bouge plus; on est couché dans une boîte, comme une grande boîte de dominos; et puis... Trott sait jouer aux dominos; pas tout à fait, mais

presque. C'est amusant, mais pas tant que d'être un polichinelle. Oh! ça!...

Un petit cheval échappé se précipite par la porte de la salle à manger. C'est Trott...

— Doucement, chéri, dit sa maman.

Il y a une dame. Elle est habillée tout en noir. De grands voiles l'enveloppent. Ses cheveux sont tout blancs. Pourtant elle n'a pas l'air vieille. Sa figure aussi est blanche. Comme elle est blanche et maigre! Trott en est interdit.

— Tu ne reconnais pas Mme de Sérigny?

Trott s'avance vers la dame et lui tend le front. Elle le chatouille en l'embrassant, parce que ses lèvres tremblent.

— Vous ne vous rappelez plus la petite Suzanne, mon petit Trott? dit une voix qui semble à Trott venir de très loin, tant elle est faible et drôle.

Si, Trott se rappelle. Elle était bien douce et bien gentille, la petite Suzanne. Mais comme elle était toujours pâle et fatiguée! Sa figure était toute blanche comme celle de sa maman, sauf sur les joues pourtant. Là, quelquefois, elle était très rouge. Elle toussait presque toujours, et cela avait l'air de lui faire si mal! Et la dernière fois qu'il l'a vue, Trott s'en souvient bien maintenant, c'était au dernier mardi gras, justement au bal d'enfants de Mme Le Corbeiller. Elle était habillée en bergère, une pauvre petite bergère qui n'aurait guère pu suivre ses moutons. On l'avait installée dans un grand fauteuil, tout empaquetée dans des châles et des fourrures. Comme Trott était en pâtre provençal, on avait

dit qu'ils étaient mari et femme. Pendant tout l'après-midi, entre les danses, il venait gravement s'asseoir auprès d'elle, l'embrasser, et lui porter des bonbons qu'elle ne mangeait pas. Elle, elle souriait très joliment, elle disait merci et elle toussait. Cette année, elle ne sera plus là. Mais il y en aura d'autres. D'abord il y aura sûrement Marie; pas Marie Dollier: celle-ci, Trott ne s'en soucie pas; mais l'autre, Marie de Milly, qui a de si longs cheveux blonds; et puis Maud, et puis Yvonne, et puis Lily... Est-ce Yvonne ou Lily que Trott préfère? Oh! mais, peut-être que Solanges viendra, si elle n'est pas trop grande... C'est ça qui serait une chance!...

— Maman, est-ce que Solanges sera au bal chez Mme Le Corbeiller?

— Trott! fait maman d'un ton de reproche.

Trott rougit et baisse le nez dans son assiette. Les enfants ne doivent pas parler à table. Et puis, peut-être qu'il aurait mieux valu ne rien dire du bal devant cette dame habillée de noir...

Enfin le dessert est mangé et voici Jane qui l'appelle. Trott s'élance comme une flèche et s'abandonne à ses mains expertes.

Une demi-heure, plus tard, maman sort du jardin escortée d'un splendide polichinelle. Trott ne se tient pas de joie. Il admire la bosse de son ventre et se tord le cou pour admirer celle de son dos. Il fait claquer ses petits sabots, plante son bicornes sur l'oreille, s'épanouit à contempler sa bigarrure rouge et jaune. Mme Le Corbeiller demeure tout près. On ira à pied, voici la maison. Il fait son entrée au salon. Bon! il faut dire bonjour à Mme Le Corbeiller. Ça, c'est encore un peu terrible. Quelques dames le tournent, le retournent, le tripotent. Qu'elles sont ennuyeuses! Horreur! Mme Plantain s'avance: quand Trott était petit, elle lui a une fois demandé la permission de l'embrasser, et il lui a dit: "Non, merci." Mais aujourd'hui que Trott est grand garçon, il rougit, et ce souvenir est pénible à sa correction.

Ouf! c'est fini. Trott s'esquive lestement pour se mêler au petit monde dansant. Il est tout ahuri d'abord. Il ne reconnaît personne. Tout cela passe, repasse, tourbillonne... Les masques, les costumes, le bruit, les lumières au milieu de l'après-midi... Trott se sent vraiment gêné. Il n'aperçoit aucune de ses amies. Ah! enfin, voilà Marie Dollier... Trott ne s'en soucie guère.

Quel malheur! Marie de Milly et Lily sont enrhumées; Yvonne et Maud étaient invitées ailleurs et n'ont pas pu venir. Le visage de Trott s'assombrit.

Heureusement, voilà Solanges! c'est ça qui est une chance! Elle est en marquise, avec des cheveux poudrés et une jupe qui bouffe. Trott, tout joyeux, court à elle. Mais elle l'accueille par un éclat de rire:

— Oh! mon pauvre Trott, que tu es laid!

Trott est horriblement humilié mais il fait bonne contenance et lui demande de danser avec lui. Mais elle répond d'un ton de protection:

— Non, mon chéri, tu es trop petit; et puis, tu comprends, tes bosses me gêneraient.

Et elle s'éloigne en riant, fièrement appuyée au bras d'un grand toréador de douze ans.

Alors Trott éprouve les affres de la jalousie et la haine de la cruauté des femmes. Toute sa bonne humeur est partie. Il y a bien d'autres petites filles, mais il ne les connaît pas, sauf Alice Prébins, avec qui il est brouillé, et Laure Lanney, qui est trop petite. Il se sent tout triste et tout seul et va se cacher dans un coin.

Il regarde les autres tourner. Il regarde les mamans qui vont prendre le thé. Il entend leurs voix et des lambeaux de phrase. Sa petite maman est bien jolie. Elle cause, elle rit, elle a l'air de s'amuser beaucoup plus que son Trott. Il regarde les murs, les tableaux, les meubles. Il y a là un fauteuil... Trott détourne les yeux, il les promène dans tous les coins du salon. Ils reviennent au fauteuil. Oui, il le reconnaît avec ses drôles de bêtes sculptées et ses grands bras. C'est dans ce

fauteuil que la petite Suzanne était assise l'an dernier.

Pauvre Suzanne! maintenant elle dort toute seule là-bas, dans le petit cimetière, près de la mer, qui lui chante ses terribles chansons. Pauvre Suzanne! Trott sait bien où elle est. Une fois, sur la route de la falaise, en passant près de la grille du cimetière, Jane, sans que maman le sache, lui a montré une croix blanche: "C'est la tombe de Suzanne." La tombe! A ce mot de tombe, si lourd, si grave, un frisson parcourt le petit cœur de Trott. Pauvre Suzanne!

On verse le thé. Les mamans rient, crient, s'embrassent, s'agitent... Des phrases lui arrivent. Et quoiqu'il n'ait pas entendu de nom, tout de même, tout de suite, il a compris de qui l'on parle. C'est la voix de sa petite maman:

— Pauvre femme! pour la sortir de ses idées, je lui ai demandé de déjeuner avec moi ce matin. Ce n'est plus qu'une ombre. Croiriez-vous que, depuis qu'elle peut se lever, elle passe tous ses après-midi sur la tombe de sa petite fille?

Toutes les dames poussent des gémissements pendant quelques secondes. Puis elles se remettent à grignoter des bonbons. Et maman est de nouveau très gaie. Elle a l'air d'avoir tout à fait oublié ce qu'elle vient de dire.

Trott est consterné. Ah! cette fois c'est un vrai remords! Il voudrait pleurer et demander pardon. Il se souvient, oh! avec une honte cruelle, comme il a été bruyant, égoïste, insouciant, à ce déjeuner où la maman de Suzanne le regardait avec des yeux si tendres! Trott voudrait se cacher pour ne plus se voir lui-même. Qu'a-t-elle dû penser de lui, qu'a-t-elle dû penser?

Oh! il aurait dû dire quelque chose de gentil, l'embrasser, la consoler! Et il n'a rien dit, rien fait, rien, rien. Trott se déteste, il se tord les mains, il voudrait se battre. Oh! cher petit bon Dieu, pourquoi avez-vous permis à votre pauvre Trott d'être si horriblement méchant? Pourquoi n'est-il

pas plutôt mort comme la petite Suzanne?...

Il y a eu un craquement de petits sabots sur le parquet. Une porte s'est doucement fermée. Au milieu de la musique, de la danse, des cris, des rires, du goûter, personne n'a rien vu. Mais le fauteuil où tout à l'heure Trott était niché est vide.

Le soleil s'est caché. La nuit commence à descendre. Une petite pluie froide, vilaine, pénétrante, s'est mise à tomber. De temps en temps les rafales d'un vent sinistre la lancent lamentablement aux vitres des maisons et aux visages des rares passants qui se retournent stupéfaits pour suivre des yeux quelque chose de rouge et jaune qui trotte dans la boue, clopin-clopant. C'est un pauvre petit polichinelle bien bouleversé, bien malheureux. Il est tout crotté, tout transi; il a perdu un de ses sabots; un coup de vent lui a pris son chapeau; il est tombé dans une flaque d'eau, et s'est relevé trempé et tout sali. Les cailloux font mal à ses pieds déchaussés, et le chemin est bien long. Mais Trott court toujours.

Voici la grille de l'entrée. Il la traverse très vite pour que le gardien ne l'arrête pas au passage. Le petit polichinelle court à travers les tombes dont les grandes croix le regardent étonnées. Brusquement il s'arrête. A quelques pas, devant la croix que Jane lui a montrée, est agenouillée la dame en noir qui, ce matin, a déjeuné chez maman. Elle est là malgré le vent, la pluie, et la nuit qui s'étend. Comment l'aborder? Trott n'a pas pensé à cela. Il reste immobile, puis fait deux pas. Une ronce lui déchire le pied. Il pousse un petit cri. La dame se retourne et le regarde avec stupeur.

— Mon petit Trott, que faites-vous là?...

Trott claque les dents de froid, d'émotion, de frayeur, de remords... Oh! il ne peut pas lui expliquer.

— Madame, je voulais, je voulais...

Il ne sait pas finir la phrase, mais il tend les bras et la regarde. Est-ce qu'elle ne comprendra pas?

Oh! la dame comprend! Elle est une maman, une maman qui a perdu son enfant. Elle saisit dans ses bras le pauvre Trott et le presse désespérément contre son cœur, comme si quelque chose de la petite morte venait de ressusciter pour elle...

Et si quelqu'un avait passé à ce moment sur la route des falaises, il aurait vu un bien singulier spectacle: une dame en grand deuil et un petit polichinelle crotté se tenant embrassés et sanglotant devant la tombe de la petite Suzanne.



BALLADE OF LOST ROMANCE

WINDS that came with a breath of June,
 Clover-scented and wet with dew;
 Waters that murmured in liquid croon,
 Singing of youth and of hope to you;
 Wistful eyes that as magnets drew,
 How you treasured their long-lashed glance!
 Tang of rosemary, hint of rue—
 These are the idols of lost romance.

Vagrant chords of a random tune
 Like to the lilts your boyhood knew,
 Vague as the scent of the roses strewn,
 Sad as the memories folly slew,
 What is their mystery, what the clue,
 Old-time ballad or country dance?
 She that you loved was false or true—
 These are the idols of lost romance.

Days that pulsed with the fire of June,
 Skies far distant and darkly blue;
 Twilight following all too soon
 Webs of dusk where the night-hawks flew;
 Lips that fast to your own lips grew,
 Vows forgotten or Fate's mischance,
 Tears and passion and fond adieu—
 These are the idols of lost romance.

ENVOY

Prince, when the dead years rise in view
 Our hearts awaken from Time's long trance;
 And echoes follow and dreams pursue—
 These are the idols of lost romance.

ERNEST MCGAFFEY.

THE MOUTHS OF BABES

By Anne O'Hagan

MRS. CLENDENNIN and her daughter Romola had been left alone together for the few minutes traditionally allotted to the expression of the final maternal emotions. Mrs. Clendennin was embarrassed by the opportunities of the situation. She had regarded herself as Romola's intellectual and spiritual inferior for so long that she could not cast aside the restraint and diffidence engendered by such a feeling and speak with the fluent sentiment which seemed appropriate to the moment. To be sure, her lovely, unworn face lighted as she looked at her tall daughter and her eyes grew misty. But she only said:

"No one hangs a skirt as Gottschalk does. I'm so glad that you decided to have him, after all, Romola. That frock is perfect."

Mrs. Ira Wigglesworth disdained a glance toward the pier-glass in which were reflected the perfection of her costume and the serious dignity of her young good looks. She surveyed her mother dubiously, as though she hesitated before some plunge, and though she spoke of Gottschalk's handiwork, it was with a remote voice.

"It does very well," she said, "though I am still in doubt about the conditions in his work-rooms. When I come back——"

"Ah, yes!" Mrs. Clendennin murmured hastily, avoiding the serious discussion which Romola's words presaged. "And are you still determined not to tell us where you are going? Isn't it rather—rather banal—not to?"

Young Mrs. Wigglesworth assumed an expression of lofty sentiment.

"We have deferred so entirely to the wishes of our friends concerning our wedding," she said, "that our marriage has been robbed of half its solemnity. It has been a show, scarcely a sacrament. But our honeymoon is to be our own."

Mrs. Clendennin's discreet eyelids hid a gleam of mirth too kind to be mockery.

"Doubtless you'll let us know where you are in time to prevent awkwardnesses, like unannounced deaths," she remarked pleasantly. "And I'm sorry, Romola dear, that you haven't liked your wedding." Her tone was a little wistful. "It was really very pretty and the bride was a great beauty."

She smiled with tender flattery, and young Mrs. Wigglesworth, almost convicted of ungraciousness, blushed slightly.

"I know that it was a pretty wedding, mother, as weddings go," she conceded. "It is the whole social routine that Ira and I dislike; but I dare say one must conform to a certain degree."

"I'm so old-fashioned myself that I like to think of a woman's wedding day as being her loveliest memory. I'm sorry yours can't be."

"Mother," Romola interrupted suddenly, "has yours been?"

The color ran in sudden little waves beneath Mrs. Clendennin's fine skin; her eyes were startled into an expression of wide inquiry.

"Perhaps I should not have said that," Romola proceeded, with the evident purpose of saying more; "but——"

"I was such a child when I was married," her mother broke in, with determined haste, "that any merry-making would have rejoiced me. I was only seventeen, you know, and I never had your character, my dear. I remember that the rectory looked lovely—it was June and a wonderful season for roses—" She stopped abruptly.

"Mother"—Romola was a little tense in voice and bearing as she rushed into the pause—"I want to speak to you about you and father and—and Mr. Goodspeed. You need not look surprised. I have seen for a long time—ever since I was fifteen or so—that—oh, that ours was not a happy home! I never said anything"—Romola's manner proclaimed a sense of her own high forbearance—"for I remembered my position. But now that I am a married woman—" Her mother's irrepressible smile made her flush and break off in her speech. "I dare say that sounds very silly to you, since I have not been two hours married. But both Ira and I are entering into marriage—differently. It isn't a selfish union for our own"—she struggled for a word and blushed furiously—"for the mere gratification of our selfish love for each other. It's a union of minds and purposes. Ira thinks that I can be of the greatest assistance to him in his work—I don't mean his law work, mother; you really needn't laugh—I mean his work of purifying politics. We think that we can do more for our times and our country together than alone. It was this conviction as much as our—our attraction for each other that brought about our engagement. And ever since then we have grown together; so that, although the ceremony which you and the world recognize as the binding one has been so recently performed—" She caught sight of the dimple close to the corner of her mother's mouth, and her pedantic fluency failed her.

"So that you feel quite married enough to meet me on a common ground?" suggested that lady helpfully. "Granted, my dear. Anything

is granted, my dear little goose—that you and Ira have been growing into a beatific oneness during your eight months of engagement, and that your father and I have been growing two-er and two-er for our twenty-five years of marriage! I'll admit any thing, Romola darling, if you'll only hurry. Ira will teach you something new about his nature if you keep him waiting. Oh, yes, he will; all men are on the same low plane when it comes to that question; it makes them furious."

"You are only trying to evade me," cried Romola miserably. "And I did wish so much to speak to you, not as a daughter to her mother, but as woman to woman! My father is such a wonderful man. How can you bear to neglect him for that—that commonplace idler?"

She was an almost tiresomely deliberate and conscientious young person, Romola Wigglesworth, but on rare occasions a heat stirred in her and hurried her into ill-considered utterances. She felt acutely conscious of youth and immoderation and all the unwise, hot-headed attributes she most decried, as she met her mother's level regard after this speech. Moreover, in spite of the emancipation of matrimony, she felt slightly alarmed.

"My dear Romola, as woman to woman, since you put it so, I should have nothing to say to you, except to deplore your impertinence and dismiss you for it. As a mother, to a daughter laboring under some emotional excitement, I can overlook your remarks. Your father—he is wonderful, as you say, and it has always pleased me that he has found in you some compensation for the incompatibility of our dispositions. . . . Ah, there is an important rap. It's you, Belinda!" as a maid of honor, breathless and as pink as her Empire frock, entered the room.

"Good gracious, Romola," cried the girl, "your good man is going about like a lion seeking whom he may devour because you have kept him so long. He's talking time-tables and

feminine foibles at an awful rate. Come on! Isn't her frock a duck, Mrs. Clendennin? And isn't she a dream?"

"Run along, Romola," laughed her mother, kissing her. "And when you come back tell me if Ira is unlike all other men when he's kept waiting. Yes, Belinda, she is a very good-looking bride. If she hadn't been, she would have been terribly outshone by her maids," she added, taking the young girl's arm and going toward the stairway with her.

In the wide hall below them the bridesmaids and ushers and a few intimate, late-staying guests were gathered for the passing out of Ira Wigglesworth, Second, and his bride. There was the gleam of white marble, the winy luster of rugs, the grace of green and blossoming plants. The girls' gowns fluttered, the hidden orchestra played something as glad and light as the dance of the leaves in the sunlight of the September afternoon outside. It was a very pretty scene; it had been a very pretty wedding. For a second Rose Clendennin felt argumentatively annoyed against the captious Romola, with her theories and her solemnities. Then her eyes fell upon her husband, and she colored at the memory of her daughter's lecture. He stood at the foot of the broad stairway, a suggestion of the scholar's stoop in his shoulders. Against a background of massed laurel leaves his features showed clear cut, fine, austere—rather forbidding in their power and repression. The sun through the fanlight above the door fell upon his head and brought out all the grayness of the hair at his temples. As he looked up his expression softened, lightened, grew animated with admiration and affection. He was very fond of Romola, very proud of her. Mrs. Clendennin felt a sudden hurt at the thought that he was going to miss Romola terribly!

"And how gray his hair is growing!" she said to herself, with the little habit of solicitude which years of estrangement had not overcome in her.

II

THE last of the wedding guests had departed. The clamor of leave-taking, the roll of wheels upon the driveways, the rustle of garments had all died away. The plants had been returned to the hothouses; the flowers had been gathered, as Romola had requested, and sent to the Children's Convalescent Home in the hills. The caterer's men and the servants had restored the dining-room to its wonted aspect. Mr. and Mrs. Francis Clendennin had smiled at the last farewells, accepted the last congratulations. Then, as usual, he had departed to his study on the second floor, and she had wandered into the music-room beneath.

She sat there now, alone in the late afternoon before the fire. She was tired, there was a wearing excitement about marrying off one's only daughter, even such a model daughter as Romola and to such an irreproachable and heaven-ordained man as Ira Wigglesworth, Second. Rose wrinkled her pretty nose.

"To change from Romola Clendennin into Mrs. Ira Wigglesworth!" she laughed. "She has no esthetic feeling, poor dear."

"Mr. Goodspeed," announced a voice at the door.

Rose turned. "Ask him to come in here," she said. "Oh, you have come in here! How nice of you, Warren, to come back and talk it over with me! Wasn't it a lovely wedding?"

"Lovely, Rose-of-the-World," he answered, sinking into the big chair opposite her. He was a large man, squarely built and, one realized, saved from middle-aged portliness only by much exercise. He was in riding clothes now, and held his crop as he leaned indolently back, surveying Rose with a half-proprietary admiration. She was very charming in her shimmering wedding finery, and his eyes, bold, tired, dark and lazy, told her so even before he stopped tugging at his dark mustache long enough to speak.

"Lovely weddin'," he drawled. "Lovely bride—point lace becomes the

stately Romola. But"—he accentuated his compliment by a pause and a half inclination toward her—"you know the Latin, Rose, '*filia pulchra, mater pulcherrima*,' or words to that effect."

"I have very little Latin," replied Rose, "but enough to detect so flagrant a misquotation. Will you have some tea? Then will you please ring the bell? How lazy you are, Warren!" as he attempted to reach the bell by leaning far out of the chair. "There—thank you. Now tell me why you ran away from the congratulatory hubbub so soon?"

"So that I might come back when all the others had gone—the same old reason, Rose! Also, so as to get in a ride—I had to see Walworth this afternoon, or rather a dog he has. Besides, I was hurt. It seemed to me that Romola was rather frigid in accepting my felicitations—the felicitations of an old friend who might have dandled her on his knee. What was the matter? Didn't she like my present?"

"Warren! It was much too lovely. Wherever did you pick it up? I never saw such a missal outside one of the great collections. You know, of course, that she was mad with delight. No, it's something quite different." She looked at him with laughter crowding to her eyes, curving her lips. The firelight flashing on her jeweled fingers as they busied themselves among the Sheffield and Sèvres tea things was not more sparkling. "No. Romola doesn't approve of you—of us."

"No? And did she diplomatically tell you as much?"

"She did—as woman to woman!" Rose's youthful laugh bubbled forth. She had no reputation as a wit—perhaps she knew how damning to popularity such flattering renown would be—but she occasionally revealed a touch of humorous appreciation that was delicious.

"What do you mean?" demanded Goodspeed.

Rose told him, presenting her

daughter's pomposity drolly enough and yet with a sort of tender pride.

"Gad! She's a wonder. Where did she ever acquire—forgive me, Rose—her amazing lack of tact?"

"You mean her principles? My good man, all her ancestors had them. You forget that I myself am a clergyman's daughter, and that Frank's people have been serious time out of mind! Principles! Even I have not been quite without them."

"That I know to my sorrow," he answered lightly. Then a silence fell upon them. A servant entered and put fresh logs upon the fire and went out when Mrs. Clendennin, with a motion of her supple wrist, had stayed the lighting of lights and the removal of the tea things. The panes of glass grew opaquely heliotrope; the firelight painted the walls with rose and lavender. And the woman sat, looking into the fire while the man watched her, wondering a little. Her attitude was tense, her features drawn so that for the second she looked almost her age. By and bye she turned toward him and her voice, like her look, was a new one.

"To your sorrow, Warren? That is scarcely true, is it?"

"What do you mean? Of course it is true."

She smiled at him across the firelight and shook her head gently.

"Ah, no, it isn't! Come—we are so old that we are done with vanities. Confess the truth to me. Isn't it much better to have lived all these years in comfort and the moderate respect of society than to have been outcast from your home—?"

"Why do you talk like that?" he reproved her soothingly. "The world that we live in is not a hard one. It doesn't send people to Coventry for divorce nowadays. And if you had—Ah, Rose!"—old recollections seemed to thrill in his voice, old fires to burn in his eyes, bent upon her in the gloom—"if you had run away with me as I begged, there would have been no exile. There would have been only——"

"There would have been exile," she

interrupted him. "Do you think I could have borne it to come back here—branded like that—back here, to run the risk of meeting my husband, to be denied intercourse with my child? No, there would have been exile. I'm not hard enough or not big enough, if you choose to call it that, to have faced down the world. And how you would have grown to hate me in that banishment! I should have nagged you to the murder point——"

"I should have adored you always—as I have done."

"You would have wanted your clubs and your stock farm, your busy idleness, the men you know and like. You would have grown to hate me, keeping you from them. And I should have gone about with my eyes sharp for slights, and should have imagined them where there was none, maybe. And I should have feared the end of your love, watched for it, pounced upon it—hastened it! Oh, it would have been dreadful!"

He looked at her, puzzled, but he made the relevant answer with the proper air of sullenness.

"You never loved me or you could not talk like this."

"Do you know," she replied swiftly, "I think you are right?"

He sat suddenly erect and stared at her. "Now, heaven deliver me from women!" he cried piously. "They are too much for me. You—a self-respecting young wife—allowed me to fall in love with you. You reached the state where you permitted me to speak to you, unrebuked, of an elopement. You refused to go away with me only on high maternal grounds—hearing the child cough croupily as she came in with her nurse, or something of that sort. Don't you remember that afternoon, Rose? It was——"

"Seventeen years ago." Rose dreamily supplied him with the date. "Romola was seven."

"Then," he pursued, "you send me away—do it with every appearance of exalted misery. When I return after two years, as mad about you as ever, my dear, as mad about you as

ever, you don't even try to repress your pleasure. You've changed, of course; you are not the same fiery, miserable, exuberant, frivolous, sweet, impulsive creature that you have been; you're a woman of the world, mistress of all the arts and accomplishments, mistress of yourself. And you let me come back to you—oh, as a friend, of course; but what a friendship it has been, Rose!"

"Your typical woman of the world, with her possession of all the arts and graces and her self-possession, is allowed one such friendship nowadays," she reminded him sweetly.

"Oh, so I have been merely the badge of position all these years? Women are certainly the devil! May I smoke?"

"You may."

He lit a cigarette and took an angry puff or two before he spoke again.

"Do you mind telling me what emotions you have been entertaining?" he demanded finally.

"No, I don't mind. I think that at first—when it happened—I was lonely and hurt, and I was vain, vain, vain! I wanted love and friendship, and I simply yearned for flattery. But I didn't differentiate much in those days, and I dare say that if Romola hadn't come in that afternoon with her croupy cough, I might have gone. I was so angry with Frank that I ached to make him suffer."

"And since I have come back? Have I been only the tame cat permitted a charming woman as evidence that she is still charming?"

"Ah, you know that isn't so." The caressing cadences of Rose's voice were matchless. "I have wanted a friend as much as ever, and I dare say I have had about the same greed of flattery. I have taken honest comfort in our real friendliness, and I'm afraid I've taken a wicked pride in the false appearance of conquest!"

"How about me?" He spoke roughly.

"My dear Warren, my conscience doesn't hurt me much about you. You've enjoyed the renown of our per-

petual flirtation, and it hasn't debarred you from— Oh, don't protest! Why shouldn't you have had your minor emotions—or your major ones? As for me, I know I've had a double charm for you. In the first place, I'm the woman you didn't have a chance to weary of; I denied what you thought you wanted, and for men like you that is a powerful attraction. And later it's been the comfort of an old, agreeable habit."

"Oh! So that's how you reason. I'm one of the men held by the unattainable?"

"Not by the unattainable, perhaps. That would soon seem sour grapes to you, I think. But by the unattained. And since we've grown older—tell me the truth, hasn't it been a mere pleasant habit, this one of a half-sentimental friendship? I've shown you my heart as well as I could—I'm not a psychologist like Romola. I haven't hidden its littleness and meanness from you. So tell me the truth!"

"The only truth which impresses me at this moment," he answered brutally, "is that it is easy to be irreproachable when one is heartless. The propriety of the bloodless woman—Oh, it is a beautiful thing! And I thought——"

"Don't go on while you are so angry," she advised him. Then, musingly, she continued: "Is it not strange that women can face facts so much more valiantly than men? Men are the romantic, the sentimental sex, women the practical."

He glowered at her across the dusk. Then gradually his frown passed and a smile lit up his face. One never could be angry long with Rose.

"Rose," he said, "how on earth have you managed to escape a reputation for awe-inspiring cleverness—such a neat, relentless, unimpassioned little dissector as you are!"

"Isn't that quite the cleverest thing to do?"

"Quite! You are marvelous. And Romola wanted to talk to you as woman to woman—Romola to you!" His laughter rang through the room.

"Ah, you are here!" said a voice from the doorway. "I didn't see you in the dusk. How are you, Goodspeed? Am I too late for a cup of tea, Rose?"

"Of course not," Rose assured her husband politely. "Will you ring for the lights, Frank? I can't see to make it."

She was very grateful to him for coming in. She divined his purpose well enough; he had somehow always managed to shield her from publishing her folly to the servants by prolonged twilight tête-à-têtes and the like. And beyond her appreciation of that gentle, unobtrusive protection, she was glad tonight to have the period put to her conversation with Warren Goodspeed. In her heart there were mingled mirth and the little hurt of a small vanity.

"He quite forgot," she was saying to herself, "how he swore that evening by all his gods that he would win me if we had to wait a thousand years for my maternal duties to Romola to be done. And I—I was actually afraid he had come to stir up those ashes according to his oath!" She laughed aloud.

"What's the joke?" asked Goodspeed, and Francis Clendennin looked at her inquiringly.

"Oh, a little snub—that fate and time and another person have combined to give me. Cream, lemon, rum—how do you take your tea, Frank? You've given me so few chances to learn!"

"By Jove, women are funny!" reflected Goodspeed, mounting his horse a few minutes later. "How she has it in for Frank! Her voice sounded more resentful over his not coming down to tea often than over my—what did she call 'em?—minor emotions—major emotions!"

III

"I must go and change for dinner," said Rose finally. "You remember Cousin Nora and Will and Edward are coming over to help us forget that Romola is gone?"

"Don't go yet, Rose. There is plenty of time. I want to speak to you."

Rose's heart, the well-trained organ that had pumped the blood so evenly and so tranquilly through her arteries these many years past, grew muffled in its beating. It had been a long, long time since Frank had "wanted to speak to her." What tempestuous scenes she had forced upon him in the unwise days of her early marriage, when she had been in a constant turmoil of rebellion against his work, against his aversion to the gaieties she loved, against the inventions which she believed to be her rivals—her supplanters!

She waited for him to go on. The fluency with which she had controlled the conversation with Goodspeed, the directness with which she had led it to the outcome desired by her, were gone. She watched her husband. The lamp-light fell upon his austere face, his remote eyes, his graying hair. He seemed in no hurry to begin, and the pause fretted her to nervousness. Surely he was not going to take her to task for her appearance of flirtation? Years and years had passed since he had seemed to concern himself about that. Finally the silence grew unbearable.

"What is it, Frank?" She hated herself for the unexpected timidity of her tone. He brought his gaze back to her from the blackness beyond the windows. It seemed to her that there was a slight quiver of pain across the impassivity of his face.

"It isn't easy to say, Rose," he began. "But it must be said. What do you wish to do? What arrangement can we make, now that Romola has left us?"

"Arrangement?" echoed Rose stupidly.

"Yes. Of course I realize that you have borne with things as they have been all these years for our daughter's sake." How tenderly he spoke the word "daughter"—the words "our daughter"! Rose's heart in its muffled beating took an irregular measure.

"And now," he went on, "that the necessity is past, now that she has her own home, her own life, what shall we do about rearranging ours?"

"Do you mean," cried the naked woman in Rose, divested of all the garments of cultivated indifference, of bland acceptance of things as they were, "do you mean that you wish to— to separate from me?"

To save her soul, to save what had been dearer to her than her soul, her pride, she could not keep the strident note of anger, of dread, of outrage, from her voice. He gave her a surprised glance.

"I should not have put it so," he said.

"But that is what you mean?"

"My dear Rose, for years we have had no life in common. We have preserved a home for Romola. I have thought that you would welcome the chance to escape from what I fear has been a bondage to you—though you will admit that I have tried to make it an easy one."

"Do you wish," said Rose leadenly, "that we should merely separate or that we should be divorced?"

"I am trying to find out what you wish."

"Have I expressed any desire for a change?"

"Your entire existence has been a protest against what has been."

"How has it been? Have I not kept your houses, received your friends, respected your name?"

"My dear Rose, let us not exasperate each other. You found out my utter uncongeniality before we had been married a year. We lived a fearful life, you pulling one way and I another, for years, until your hatred of me and my ways grew to be indifference, and until I learned some philosophy. But we have lived a worse one since—or so I have found it. Now you have a chance to end it. You are young yet and—forgive me the personality—you are a very fascinating woman. You will perhaps wish to make up in your later years for what you missed in your early youth——"

Her face was aflame.

"You mean that I may wish to marry again?"

"I do."

"Do you imply anything in particular by that?"

Why, why was she growing so hurt, so angry, so perturbed, so like the tumultuous girl he had married? Why could she not continue to feel analytical and faintly amused as she had felt with Warren Goodspeed?

"I am neither blind, deaf nor a complete fool," he answered her last spoken question. "Your intimacy with Goodspeed has come very near to a scandal—don't misunderstand me! I know that it has been technically innocent—even more than that. Otherwise I should have ended it, of course. But"—the sternness that had been in his look and voice when he spoke of Goodspeed vanished—"I'm tired, Rose. I've been anticipating this moment and this talk ever since young Wigglesworth first came to me about Romola. I have worn my mind out in thought. I have no energy left to dress the thing becomingly, so you'll forgive blunt, ugly speaking. If you and Goodspeed are in love with each other and want to marry—it can be arranged."

"And you'll be free to invent more electric propellers and automatic signals." She spoke with a childish spitefulness and inadequacy of which she was ashamed even as she spoke. He looked about the luxurious room, at the piano which a great artist had decorated for her, at the harpsichord which a French queen had played, at one or two of the paintings on the wall—and he smiled.

"Don't quarrel with the inventions, my dear. They've added a good deal to your comfort. And if I can give you up to—to anyone—you won't grudge me my poor solace!"

Rose sat very still, spots of angry color in her cheeks, angry, wounded brightness in her eyes. No man cared for her! She was growing old, she was losing her power—she, the assured, the charming! Her old adorer, her long

admirer, had forgotten the resolves of his early ardor, had accepted with the most perfunctory resentment the position assigned him of a harmless custom. And now her husband was for repudiating her, for turning her politely over to the next bidder.

"It seems to me that you can give me up very easily," she said bitterly. And as she spoke she wondered why she felt none of the conversational ease, the ability to direct, to dissect, to play with ideas, that she had felt so pleasantly in her other talk.

"You withdrew yourself from me so long ago that it is nonsense now for you to talk of my giving you up." He spoke with slow repression, but there was an undertone of excitement in his very control. Suddenly she began to laugh hysterically.

"What is it, Rose?"

"Nothing," she half gasped, "except that it is queer not to have anyone want you! And—perhaps Romola will take me in. She disapproves of me frightfully, to be sure, and I should hate being there—there'll be endless committee meetings!"

Francis Clendennin's breath came a little hard.

"Rose," he cried, "don't trifle! Is it true—can it be true—that you don't want that freedom I offered you? Be sure, be sure, my dear! It's your chance I'm giving you. And if you don't take it—if you don't want it"—he came close to her, standing above her—"you'll have to stay on my terms—my terms. And do you know what they are?" He caught her hands and drew her to her feet, drew her toward him, her shining, fascinated eyes on his demanding, compelling ones, her lips apart, the color burning to her temples. "Do you know?" he cried.

"Oh," she cried breathlessly, thrilled and dominated by him. "Tell me, tell me! I want to stay!"

The world was blotted out for a whirling, golden instant. Then:

"Mr. and Mrs. Brainerd and Mr. Wilson," announced the automaton at the doorway.

IV

THREE days later there alighted from the up-country train at the Deer Club station Mr. and Mrs. Francis Clendennin. Radiance enfolded both of them. She looked upon the hills, splendid in early autumn colors, with wide-eyed delight.

"Frank, it hasn't changed! They've only built a new station. Isn't it heavenly of them? How many years has it been?"

"Twenty-five years and three months," he told her, with much exaltitude.

"Oh, my dear, to think that we never celebrated our silver wedding! It's dreadful. Where's the carriage?"

"I'm going inside to make some inquiries. Rose! I'm afraid I forgot to send the telegram—I was so rushed."

"What does it matter? You can telephone over, can't you?"

They opened the door of the station and entered. A young woman in an admirably tailored costume sat on a bench against the wall. Her lips were firmly compressed, her eyes fixed and brooding.

"Romola!" gasped Mrs. Clendennin.

The young woman leaped to her feet.

"Mother—father! What is it? Has anything happened?"

"How did you ever chance to come here? Where is Ira? What are you doing at the station alone?"

The look of righteous and determined wrath which had dissolved upon young Mrs. Wigglesworth's face under the shock of seeing her parents, returned. But training stood her in good stead. She answered the questions categorically.

"Ira and I came here because father had told me that you and he spent your honeymoon here. Ira, I suppose, is at the club. I am waiting for the down train to New York. I am going home."

"Explain yourself, Romola." Her father spoke gently.

"I cannot stand it! I won't!" burst forth young Mrs. Wigglesworth. "Mother, I appeal to you. We have

been married only three days—there!"—irrepressible dimples deepened the corners of Rose's mouth—"and Ira has practically deserted me. That abominable man, Mr. Enright, who organizes good government clubs in the slums or something, is at the club—resting! And the civil service man—Brownell, or whatever his hateful name is! And Ira—it's a city politics conference, that's what it is! And Ira tried to excuse himself by saying that it's an important political year, with the governorship election and all that. So I am going back home until election is over. I have left him a note telling him that when he has time to think of his wife, after the polls are closed, I will return to him."

"Frank, go and telephone to Ira," commanded Rose softly. Then she turned her eyes, humid with tenderness and pity and bright with unquenchable mirth, toward her stately young daughter.

"Don't repeat your mother's mistakes, dear child, dear daughter," she said. "Don't be a petulant little girl. Be the woman you are. Be glad with all your heart that your husband's interests are large, impersonal ones, not petty, selfish, frivolous affairs. Dear, I'm not a lecturing mama. I talk to you as woman to woman"—she gave a sudden little laugh as the words struck her ears. "Come back with us, and enter your husband's life and seek no other. Look at me, Romola. I have starved my heart these many years because I would not do that. And now, though happiness beyond my deserts has come to me—it's a barren soil it has to grow in. Oh, Romola, don't be silly, like your mother. Don't be wicked, like your mother!"

Romola looked at her with a humble and bewildered air.

"Why, mother," she said, "I didn't know—I didn't guess you cared about me or—or—anything—like this. I'll do whatever you say. Only," she surveyed her father, hurrying back from the station-agent's telephone, eager and ardent, like a lover, and she spoke with a certain shrewdness, "only—your

silliness and your wickedness, as you call them, don't seem to have done any irreparable harm."

Rose looked at her, her head a little on one side, with an air of delicate consideration.

"There's always the personal equation," she said softly.

"Yes," said Romola simply, unresentful of the little boast, if indeed she understood it; "and I wish you'd show me how to do my hair."



MY FAMILY

I AM a personage of note—
 Ask anyone who knows.
 I am the poetess who wrote
 "The Reading of the Rose."
 The guest of many a woman's club
 I'm fêted much abroad.
 Whate'er I do—aye, there's the rub—
 My family won't be awed!

I have a soul serene and sweet
 And feminine, though strong;
 My instinct is naïve and neat,
 And rarely leads me wrong.
 And other souls I often aid—
 They write and tell me so—
 But why this is, I am afraid
 My family ne'er will know!

My conversation sparkles with
 An effervescing wit;
 My sentences have point and pith,
 My fancies fairly flit.
 Extemporaneous wisdom flows
 In torrents from my tongue,
 And yet no admiration glows
 In those I dwell among!

Recitals at Delmonico's
 I very often give,
 And read my lines—selecting those
 That are most apt to live.
 But when with pardonable pride
 My ticket list I show,
 My family—in stage aside—
 "Will anybody go?"

Of course I know that I am great,
 And there are two or three
 Who could most confidently state
 More than is said by me.
 Abroad the lion I may be,
 At home I am the lamb;
 Will no one tell my family
 How wonderful I am?

ETHEL M. KELLEY.

TO THE RESCUE OF THE TODHUNTERS

By Roland Franklyn Andrews

ONE of the bitter recollections of my life is that I made the Harry Todhunters comfortably well-to-do. I should be rather glad on Mrs. Tod's account, because I do not believe she has ever quite forgotten my glorious martyrdom, and because she is one of two women in our delightful little brass-rolling city who know the salient points of difference between my lone hunter and a clothes-horse. But Tod has spoiled a rather promising personality by steeping it in the higher capitalistic thought, and he insists upon viewing me as one to whom he must be earnestly helpful because of past services rendered. And there was a girl. That is why I tell the story of the rise in the Todhunter fortunes.

I was on my way to a family dinner in a place which had some importance to me, and I stopped in at the club. I hadn't expected to find anyone I knew there, because in the provinces the game law protects bachelors only at a very tender age, and clubs are not permitted noticeably to mitigate that grand old Plymouth Rock saturnalia of succotash and pumpkin pie known to New England as dinner.

But Tod was there. He was reigning among the remnants of the café and singing comic songs to the ruins. At the moment of my entrance he was endeavoring to convince the waiters that he could stand on his head atop of an inverted champagne glass and chant the "Recessional." He desisted long enough to prove that my top-hat could be made to collapse like an opera hat, after which I learned from the waiters that he had been cultivating this spirit of playfulness since

early afternoon. Tod's own deposition was to the effect that he had wearied of poverty and a bitter world.

Now, this was the time when by good provincial custom Todhunter was scheduled to arrive in the bosom of his family. However, it seemed to me his present notion of *bonhomie* might possibly prove unpopular in the home circle. Therefore I gently confided him to the steward, with instructions to hold him under the cold-water faucet until his mood changed. Then I figured out that I would have just time for hurrying around to his bungalow and convincing his better sevenths that he was experiencing some perfectly legitimate sort of a crowded hour and couldn't possibly get home for his regular evening sustenance.

I got no further than the revelation of my identity to the maid, who has known me ever since I came to town, when Mrs. Todhunter eliminated the portières in one fell swoop and stood before me.

"John Cleves," she cried dramatically, "where is Harold Todh——?"

I put out my hands in pleading. "It's all right," I began. "Don't worry. Nothing has happened. Tod——"

"Where is Harold Todhunter?"

I adopted a tone of conciliatory confidence. "You see," I explained, "Tod has a very important business engagement——"

"I suppose," interrupted Mrs. Tod, transfixing me with a glance of scorn, "that is why he told me over the 'phone that he was going to be Queen of the May."

I sat down without waiting for the invitation.

"And that he was going back, back to Baltimore!"

"Madame," I cried desperately, "Tod can't come—he just can't."

Mrs. Tod threw upward one agonized glance which seemed to pierce the ceiling of the domicile and sweep the household regions above. Then she returned to me.

"He's at the club, isn't he?" she asked, with what she doubtless considered calmness.

"He is surrounded by it," I admitted weakly.

Mrs. Tod gave the feminine version of a groan.

I jumped up. "Don't cry," I begged.

"Aunt Eleanor is here," she cried tragically.

"If," said I, "you will only remember that an important business engagement——"

"Won't help at all, and it's a nasty little lie, anyway," snapped Mrs. Tod. "Oh, it's awful!"

"I can go and get him," I suggested obligingly.

Mrs. Tod shuddered.

"Or," I went on, "I can impersonate him over the telephone and explain that I've suddenly been called to New York—and afterward I can kick him all over town." I added this last hurriedly, because Mrs. Tod was dabbling at her eyes and I began to have strong thoughts concerning the behavior of dear Harold.

Mrs. Tod stopped dabbling suddenly. "Aunt Eleanor's never seen him," she said.

"This is an ill time for introductions," I mused.

"And he's just got to make a nice impression, because she's so dreadfully rich and we're so foolishly poor. He didn't meet her at the train, and—it's a crisis, I tell you!"

The situation seemed rather worse than I had realized. Out of affection for the Tods I also groaned.

The groan exercised a surprising effect on Mrs. Tod. Instead of echoing it she laughed. It was nervous, perhaps, but it was unmistakably a laugh.

"Now, listen to me, Jack Cleves," she rattled. "I've got an idea. You've got to help. Aunt Eleanor's poor dear old eyes are so bad she can't see anything without her spectacles. She's almost blind. I'll steal her glasses, and you'll do your impersonating without any telephone. You'll be Harold through dinner and all the evening. In the morning, when she finds her spectacles, he'll be here himself."

"Wh-a-a-at!" I gasped.

Mrs. Tod clapped her hands to her head. "Oh, don't begin objecting," she wailed, "and don't stand there looking like a wild rabbit. Can't you see it's got to be done? If you're going to be conventional you might as well go back to the club. All you have to do is to carve and to be careful not to be too polite to me. It's just a lark. Oh, please, please, please!"

"But Aunt Eleanor——" I protested.

"I tell you she can't see anything but blurs without her glasses, and your voice sounds like Harold's when he has a cold."

"Margaret, my dear," called some cracked tones from the upper floor.

Mrs. Tod's convulsive shiver conveyed the idea of utter despair. I stepped forward. Mrs. Tod is by way of being a good sort, as they said in London during the three days I was there on a Cook tour. "I'll do it," I declared.

"Coming, auntie," cried Mrs. Tod, and sped up the stairway.

I slipped out of my overcoat and hurriedly took to the telephone. My absence from the other dinner *en famille* was yet to be satisfactorily arranged. "Business," I stammered, "very important. A complicated sort of a deal that involves some friends as well as myself." Then I punched the transmitter. I wanted to go to that other dinner. I sat down to brood about it.

Mrs. Tod, back again, pale but determined, brandished a pair of thick-lensed spectacles before my eyes. "Easy as could be!" she cried. "Aunt

will be here in a minute. I'm going to bring her now."

"Do I—er—kiss her?" I asked hopelessly.

"Of course you do. Why not?"

"Dear lady," said I bravely, "for your sweet sake——"

Mrs. Tod whisked away. I threw back my shoulders and struggled to view my surroundings with a proprietary air. One always succeeds better in such situations if one can get into the atmosphere, and things were moving rapidly.

"Now, one step more, auntie." I heard Mrs. Tod's voice in the hall, and I strode forward heroically to greet my aunt.

She was a little, wizened-up, but still formidable-looking personage in ominously crackling black silk, who stood blinking feebly at me. There were pronounced trouble-hinting lines about her stern lips, and she was obviously displeased about something. Presumably it was the inexplicable loss of her spectacles. I seized her manfully in my arms and with reckless abandon, full upon her brow, I planted a resounding caress.

"My dear Aunt Eleanor!" I cried. "Welcome, my own dear Aunt Eleanor!"

"This is my Harold," announced Mrs. Tod gaily.

"I can't find my glasses," snapped the object of my salute, vigorously disengaging herself.

Blithe joviality in the face of rebuff is my usual method of procedure.

"Oh, I'm sure you don't need them," I protested, with a flourish intended to convey the idea of heartiness. "Glasses are for old people, and you and I aren't really old."

"Never lost them before," persisted Aunt Eleanor. "And you're old enough to know better."

"We can find them tomorrow when it's daylight," assured Mrs. Tod.

"Dinner is served," announced the maid.

I have never quite mastered the social geography of the Todhunters' table. They are a pleasantly whim-

sical folk who change head and foot from time to time. In my wholly excusable confused state, I was close to installing Aunt Eleanor before the carvers when Mrs. Tod interrupted. "This is auntie's seat," she warned in honeyed tones and a look of vicious indignation.

"I can't see a thing," complained our beloved aunt peevishly. "I can't even see what Harold looks like."

"Most fortunate for me," I asserted modestly. "I am not beautiful."

"No," agreed Mrs. Tod, with a promptness which, under the circumstances, seemed both unduly enthusiastic and unwise, "but he's handy to have around the house."

"My dear Mrs. Todhunter," I began, with a touch of asperity.

"Harold!" interposed Mrs. Tod, scowling blackly.

"Margaret, sweetheart," I corrected myself glibly, and rejoiced at Mrs. Tod's angry flush.

"Those glasses," said Aunt Eleanor. "They must be somewhere."

"Undoubtedly," I admitted, "but my dear wife has very probably yielded once more to her passion for putting everything carefully away, in which case you will never see them again." I considered that I was even with Mrs. Tod for her strictures concerning my appearance. "A little more of this excellent soup?" I urged.

"I can't see to eat it," snapped Aunt Eleanor unpleasantly. "How much do you pay your cook?"

"You must ask Margaret about that," I explained. "I'm really only a guest in this domestic establishment."

Mrs. Tod gave the figure, but Aunt Eleanor was not to be baffled. "You are the financial head," she decreed; "you ought to know."

I didn't seem to be helping the Tods as I should. "I devote a certain sum to dear Margaret each month," I explained. "She does splendidly with the household expenses."

So far I was strictly within the truth. I have not yet ceased my contributions of violets and such-like at the shrine of Mrs. Tod. Besides, it was a

most interesting experience to refer to her in these terms of endearment.

"Well, you pay your cook too much," declared Aunt Eleanor. "You must be prospering more than I supposed. How successful are your worldly affairs, Harold?"

Obviously this was my opportunity to redeem all mistakes and to aid the golden quest of the Todhunters. "They are not"—I hesitated carefully—"as fortunate as I could wish."

"Bad management somewhere," commented Aunt Eleanor.

"My recent investments," I went on unhappily, "are perhaps not unpromising, but—er—certainly undeemonstrative."

"There!" pealed Aunt Eleanor in vicious triumph. "I knew it! I wrote four pages to warn you against them."

I judged from Mrs. Tod's violent gymnastics that she was trying to kick my shins under the table. Her kaleidoscopic facial expressions certainly indicated displeasure. Therefore I relapsed into silence. We went along in comparative safety, despite my terror at the carving, until we arrived at the salad. By that time the lack of camaraderie was so pronounced and Mrs. Tod's aspect of woe so pitiful that I felt constrained to make another effort.

Now, the Todhunters have salad plates made in the likeness of broad green leaves full of depressions and elevations and queer little kinks in their surfaces, just as real leaves might have. With these they give you forks of twisted Russian silver, fair to look upon, but so delicate that they invariably bend and fail you at critical moments among the lettuce. Tod and I have said some rather clever sarcastic things about them. I tried again.

"I can't think of anything worse than having to spend one's life eating from these plates with these forks," I ventured lightly.

"You both professed to be wonderfully fond of them when I gave them to you," came the swift response.

I turned hurriedly to the cheese. I could not face Mrs. Todhunter's accusing eye. "Of course," I laughed merrily. "I was only joking."

"Young people have such strange ideas of humor nowadays."

"And Harold always tries so hard to be funny," added Mrs. Tod viciously.

"So it seems. I suppose it was a flash of wit that led him to miss me at the train. Perhaps the loss of my glasses is a joke."

I resigned myself to a life of polite poverty for the Todhunters.

The dessert passed without further peril. "Let's all go into the den," I suggested. "We'll have our coffee there, and I'd like my after-dinner smoke."

"Margaret," thundered Aunt Eleanor, "you told me he never used tobacco."

Mrs. Tod seemed close to collapse. I put my hand to my pocket and bitterly smashed my cigar. "Another of my little jokes," I faltered.

Back in the sitting-room we floundered for an unending age in family history. I know more or less about both sides of the Todhunters, and I was acutely discreet. Cold perspiration beaded my brow and neck as we maltreated a mighty line of grandfathers, uncles, cousins once removed and other brilliant subjects for home-circle conversation. But I held my own. No serious error could be charged to me. Mrs. Tod seemed encouraged. I felt better. However, the shimmering tropic sky is the natural abiding-place of the typhoon. Suddenly Aunt Eleanor wheeled upon me. "Now, Harold," she announced, "we will discuss your financial condition. Those investments——"

I gasped for air.

"Miss Addington," announced the maid at the doorway. And Miss Addington, being on terms of intimacy, appeared simultaneously with the announcement.

I have mentioned a certain engagement of mine to dine *en famille*. To my mind, Miss Addington was the princi-

pal feature of that *famille*. However, I was not glad to see her. I fell over a tabouret when I stood up. For her own part she stared at our pleasant little gathering in astonishment.

"I beg pardon, Margaret," she said very stiffly. "I didn't know——"

"My aunt, Mrs. Rossiter," fluttered Mrs. Tod, struggling to telegraph the whole complicated explanation with her eyes. "Of course——"

"I have met Mr. Cleves," admitted Miss Addington, with acid distinctness.

"Eh?" questioned Aunt Eleanor. "Now where are my glasses?"

With a wild glare Mrs. Tod charged to the rescue. "Grace dear," she cried, "you must see my new centrepiece before Norah puts it away." And by sheer force she dragged the dangerous intruder out of the room. Echoes of breathless whisperings in the hall told my sinking heart that the situation was being illuminated. But I have never believed that explanation was truly brilliant. It may have brightened the darkest features of the case, but it didn't prevent Grace Addington from marrying the doctor the next fall.

Robbed of my character, weak and sickening, I turned at bay. "This edition of Pepys's Diary," I commenced, clutching a copy of the city directory, "is——"

"How can I see without my glasses?" demanded Aunt Eleanor.

"She's gone," informed Mrs. Tod, bustling back into the room. "She had to hurry on. She's spiteful because some man she had asked to dinner didn't appear."

"Well, did she expect to find him here?" said Aunt Eleanor.

"She did not," I answered, with conviction.

"Then perhaps we shall be permitted to go on with that money question without further interruption."

"But——" said I.

"No need of 'buts' in the family."

Mrs. Tod stared helplessly. Her resources were at an end. I tried to imagine what form the onrushing crash

would assume. Most certainly all would be over if I attempted to elucidate the mysteries of Tod's financiering.

"Aunt Eleanor," I commanded, with a wave of my trembling hand, "forgive me, but you must not. I forbid it. I, for one, refuse to sit idly here any longer, realizing the real physical suffering, not to mention the annoyance, you experience in being without your glasses. I am going downtown. I am going to find an optician. I shall drag him out of his bed, if necessary. I know he will be able to supply us with some sort of spectacles to afford you at least partial relief. No, don't object. They won't fit, of course, but they will serve until your own are found. They will at least enable you to see your nephew's face. Why"—here I let my tone break into vibrant tenderness—"do you think I could consent to let you consider my own poor affairs when I know the bitter discomfort you are undergoing? Not I—not Harry Todhunter."

I backed warily toward the door. Aunt Eleanor, in spite of herself, was checked by my earnest eloquence. She sat in her chair sputtering feebly. Mrs. Tod followed me to the hall.

"This settles it," I whispered. "This, in the chaste vernacular of my long-lost Tenderloin, is 'a good get-away.' I'll find Tod and bring him home when the lights go out. Go back to her now. Good night—and thanks for a delightful evening."

Mrs. Tod fled. I threw open the door. At the same moment Tod fell in.

"'Hail to zhee, 'r Alma Mater!'" he chanted joyously. "'I got troub—troub—troub—troubles of my own.' Say, what you doin' here with m' wife?"

This was the last straw. In wholehearted ferocity I banged Tod's rolling head against the casing, and in glorious exultation I kicked him down his own doorstep. I turned back to confront the affrighted Mrs. Tod, Aunt Eleanor close astern.

"Only a drunken man trying to break into our happy home," I ex-

plained politely; "a mere trifle after some of the things we've been through together, love."

The door closed. I lifted Tod from the lawn where he was resting and propelled him back to the club. Here I personally applied the cold-water treatment, after which we had a session of correction and reproof. At midnight I placed him, chastened and collected, in a measure, inside his front door, and trudged wearily home. My dreams were not altogether rapturous. That broken dinner engagement preyed upon my mind, and I had visions of Aunt Eleanor.

Next day, at the Hawley-Knapps'—they control the biggest rolling-mill, and by virtue of its prodigious output they lead our social life—I met Mrs. Tod, radiant and lovely.

"Jack Cleves," she murmured confidentially, "you are a brick."

"If you will kindly impress that fact upon the Addingtons—" I suggested.

"It has all come out splendid. Aunt Eleanor is perfectly sweet. She hasn't suspected a thing."

"I am delighted."

"And she is going to do ever so many things for us. She thinks Harold was perfectly splendid because he—you—insisted on making her comfortable when she was willing to give the time to a business talk."

"Believe me," I protested, "I suffered with her every moment."

"And that isn't the best of it. Harold isn't going to drink a single thing away from his own table for a year."

"I'm not surprised," said I. I remembered the kicking.

We were silent for a moment. Then said Mrs. Tod softly: "You're a good friend, Jack Cleves."

All of which made me feel warmly chivalric and quite content with myself. But afterward Tod became a person of consequence, and Grace Addington married the doctor.



LE RECIF DE CORAIL

LE soleil sous la mer, mystérieuse aurore,
Eclaire la forêt des coraux Abyssins
Qui mêle, aux profondeurs de ses tièdes bassins,
La bête épanouie et la vivante flore.

Et tout ce que le sel ou l'iode colore,
Mousse, algue chevelue, anémones, oursins,
Couvre de pourpre sombre, en somptueux dessins,
Le fond vermiculé du pâle madrépore.

De sa splendide écaille éteignant les émaux,
Un grand poisson navigue à travers les rameaux;
Dans l'ombre transparente indolemment il rôde;

Et, brusquement, d'un coup de sa nageoire en feu,
Il fait, par le cristal morne, immobile et bleu,
Courir un frisson d'or, de nacre et d'émeraude.

JOSÉ-MARIA DE HEREDIA.

INCIDENT TO THE SEASON

By Margarita Spalding Gerry

"HOW does Washington compare with Madrid?" asked Sam Gordon-Bradley fatuously, as one who cannot doubt the answer.

"It is much more beautiful," replied Mendoza. He used the tone of saddened conviction with which he made a point of answering the inevitable query. "And yet I think one misses, a little, the dirt," he continued judicially. "Without it all this fairness lacks a certain depth of the tone artistic. Is it not so?" He looked down at his dapper companion and awaited his verdict with not too evidently exaggerated anxiety.

Sam Gordon-Bradley smiled with eager assent.

"Possibly the time will remedy a so regrettable defect." A smile lurked somewhere behind the delightful melancholy of the Spaniard's eyes. "It would appear that you of the United States care more to be clean than to present to the eye a varied color scheme. It is a lack." He sighed.

Both were in afternoon calling attire, but the big man's gray gloves were twisted into a string in his shapely brown hands, and Bradley longed to alter the inclination of his hat.

"And who inhabits that most melancholy and colorless of mansions?" asked the stranger as they passed a pretentious house on Dupont Circle.

Bradley involuntarily gave a nervous glance over his shoulder. It would be awkward for him to have his companion overheard.

"The family of Lady X," he replied, with dignity. The fact that his interlocutor was a second secretary of lega-

tion could not keep the disapproval out of his voice. But the swarthy gentleman went on buoyantly:

"I will hope—yes, I will even believe that that most lovely lady had nothing to do with the designing of the paternal dwelling. The genius of her gowning would lead one to think so much."

Bradley shuddered; he had once met at the Charity Ball a member of the exalted family, and irreverence hurt.

Mendoza looked about him with keen eyes. They were walking down the wide vista of Sixteenth street. The softening veil of the foliage had fallen long ago, leaving only the indestructible grace of overarching trees to recall summer beauty. But the far-reaching lines of comely homes brightened his mood with their suggestion of trim prosperity. He squared his shoulders and walked more briskly.

The streets were full of life and movement. The sunshine glanced off the trappings of the carriages—at this time in the afternoon an uninterrupted procession—in dazzling flashes, and accentuated the vivid touches of color in the costumes of the women. The Spaniard wondered that the never-ending stream, flooding the sidewalks, congesting the streets, eddying in and out of houses, was so exclusively of women. And the burden of their labor—as well as the badge of their high calling—was in card-cases, held cautiously that gloves might be immaculate. One and all, these ladies confronted their visiting-lists with determined industry and a sense of rigorous duty. Here and there a frock-coated, silk-hatted man appeared, almost overwhelmed by this torrent of the feminine, wherein the

rustle of silk linings, the insistence of high-keyed voices, the dominance of color, the breath of violets, were subtly mingled to confound him.

Here and there before a door where an awning proclaimed a more formal reception than the universal "day," the stream hurried into opposing whirls, lashed into fury by the bellowing of the megaphone as it summoned the carriages of the departing.

Mendoza looked about him rather helplessly.

"But do all these have to do this, too, even as I?" he demanded.

Gordon-Bradley looked puzzled. "Have to do what?" he asked.

"March in this procession of the condemned to ennui——"

Gordon-Bradley stared at him blankly.

"It is assuredly not to be explained otherwise," went on the Spaniard. "No one could submit himself to it from a desire for happiness. It is yet early and one asks me why I have been in and out of thirteen strange houses this afternoon—thirteen houses where, in each, the same ladies—to my vision—ornamented with many metal disks, presented themselves in a phalanx to oppose my progress; thirteen houses wherein thirteen young ladies—visibly first cousins—have questioned me, 'Are you making the rounds?' and, 'Is not Mrs. A. B. C.'s tea-table beautiful?' I am asked why I am doing this thing which is not amusing, and I reply, 'Because my so deluded country which sent me here expects that I aid to cement the bondages of friendship with the Americans, and it seems in this way it is to be done.' 'But why,' I ask, 'does the everywhere-present phalanx of similar ladies and the thirteen cousinly young ladies constitute the government?'" He paused. "And where are the men with whom I should be cementing the so lately broken alliance?" he added whimsically.

Bradley, whose tenderly nursed visiting-list occupied most of his waking hours, endeavored to assume a sympathetic air of masculine superiority.

"It is a duty one owes to society,"

he explained. "Our hostesses need to know who are to be considered in society each season. They know then where to turn for dancing men—otherwise they forget."

"Oh, they forget, do they, my friend?" Mendoza regarded the little man for a moment with a suppressed smile. "Well, well, it is a tribute to the greatness of this country that it does not yet know all its desired ones."

Gordon-Bradley bowed. "But so far as men are concerned," he said significantly, "you will find enough of them at Mrs. Delano's. All the men in society—or out of it—go to her Thursdays."

"Then, am I to suppose that the Senator Delano is to be cherished, or is it that the lady has charms not always possessed by the ladies of the great American reception phalanx?" Mendoza queried lightly.

Bradley looked wise. "You may suppose both things. But—men also go because of the young ladies who assist her."

"*Bueno!* Then I may hope for a novel salutation or another style of coiffure."

"No doubt of that." The dapper little man halted before a broad flight of stone steps. "But"—he paused meaningly—"you need not take quite as much pains in cultivating them. They're usually awfully pretty and clever—too clever, sometimes, you know; but—well—Mrs. Delano rather makes a point of taking up girls who wouldn't otherwise have any footing in society—clerks' daughters, and that. They're attractive, but not quite *comme il faut* in the strictest sense. I thought I really ought to tell you of this; it may prevent complications, you know."

Mendoza was puzzled. The young ladies not *comme il faut*, and receiving with a lady in official life? And why were "clerks' daughters" beyond the pale in the United States? Was everything here not democratic? And were clerks not officers of the Administration? He had a dozen questions ready when the door opened and the opportunity to ask them had gone.

He entered, still wondering how much the little man meant by saying that the young ladies of the reception in this house were not *comme il faut*.

Five minutes afterward, having charmed—to enthusiasm—the ladies of “the great American reception phalanx,” he was murmuring to himself: “But what then? Am I some weeks here and yet look for the novel at these receptions? There is the young lady who endures to be entertained—they call her the ‘Gibson girl’—in every room there is one; and there is the little young lady with small beauty—she will talk much and make many movements, and she will always be childlike. And those gentlemen with her are from the States; in no other way could there be so much originalness in the planning of their coats. Those—how that young lady knows how to laugh!”

She was sitting at the tea-table in an adjoining room, and she was laughing at the parting diatribe against her whist-playing fired by the Chinese Minister, who shook his fat finger at her by way of emphasis. Her white hands hovered over the china and silver, restoring order, with a pretty suggestion of domestic intimacy. Her pose, the lines of her delicate gray gown, the russet lights in her hair brought out by the shaded light at her side, held Mendoza's errant fancy.

“Some of these United States customs have value,” he reflected, as she raised smoke-gray eyes to his in response to his request for a cup of tea.

“Do you really want tea?” she queried, as skeptically as a hospitable maiden could.

“It is my favorite; more, with the pure water it is my only beverage.”

“But consider the danger!” she pleaded.

“Danger is sometimes stimulative, also tea—sometimes.”

“It is too much for you to be both brave and a philosopher. One trembles before you. Will you have this tea with cream or lemon?”

“With cream,” sighed Mendoza.

“And how much sugar?”

“I leave that with you.” His gesture placed his happiness, his destiny, in her hands.

She responded by dropping five pieces into his cup with swift prodigality.

“*A vuestra salud*,” as he raised the cup to his lips. “It would perhaps be wise,” he said after the first taste, “that you echo the wish.”

“Is it not right?” she asked anxiously.

He drank the nauseous stuff with every evidence of enjoyment.

“I thrive upon the sweets of life, señorita! ‘Sweetness and light’—is that not the word of your poet?—that describes my existence.”

The girl looked up at the tall figure with its assurance of strength, and laughed appreciatively. The attaché found the promise of her smile more than fulfilled. He liked women who could laugh; he liked the curve of her upper lip, delicate and yet rich. He liked the poise of her head with its suggestion of the brave days of powder and patches. He appropriated a chair, happily left unclaimed, and settled himself by the tea-table with a serene assurance of enjoyment.

“Are you generous, that you laugh at me?” he demanded.

“You can't expect generosity from women, you know. Weakness is always cruel,” she said, rearranging the tea-cups.

“Ah, but not in that way should women be weak,” said Mendoza caressingly, “and not in that way should they be cruel.”

She laughed again. “I shall certainly have to mind my phrases. There is Mr. Gordon-Bradley looking for somebody.”

“It is my graceless self—I escape him.” Then, quickly, “Do you know this Mr. Bradley?”

“Oh, yes, very few escape—do not.”

“But you have met him—that is the important thing.” He arose and tapped the youth on the shoulder. “You await me?”

“Yes,” said Gordon-Bradley, turning quickly. “We must hurry if we

would make Mrs. Page's tea before six."

"I talk with this young lady," said Mendoza, indicating her—they had drawn a little aside—and his gesture was a tribute in itself. "I know not her name. I have not been presented——"

"Miss Talbot?" said Gordon-Bradley, who was not sensitive to suggestion. "She is rather handsome, isn't she? Are you ready now?"

"Will you not present me?" demanded the attaché with formality.

"Oh, there isn't time."

"Will you not present me?" repeated Mendoza blandly.

"Certainly, certainly." Bradley turned hurriedly to the lady. "I am glad to see you again, Miss Talbot. No, thank you, no tea; we are due at Mrs. Page's. May I present my friend, Señor Mendoza?—of the Spanish legation, you know. Now shall we go?"

"My friend, I beg that you will go without me. Is a man to have no rest? I am fatigued beyond endurance. Will you not present my compliments to Mrs. Page? And tell her I was—detained?" with the faintest flicker of a glance toward Miss Talbot.

Bradley stared at him incredulously. "But it's the affair of the day!"

"Truly, my absence is unavoidable. You will say for me, will you not, that it is with much grief that I do not come? And Mr. Gordon-Bradley, will——?"

But Bradley could not afford time to remonstrate; he was already at the door.

Mendoza laughed a little, then he settled himself luxuriously.

"Ah—but I find it repose to bow no more my back, and say that I find the United States charming."

"You haven't escaped. I shall ask you presently what you think of—all this," with a comprehensive wave.

"May I not be saving of my English speech and explain simply that 'all this' is United States?"

"Oh, no, it isn't! It is as new to me as to you. You see, I'm from Virginia." Evidently Miss Talbot thought that her position required no further

explanation. "I met Mrs. Delano last summer at the White Sulphur, and when she knew I was coming to Washington to visit Aunt Carter she asked me to assist her on her 'days,' and I was so glad to do it. I never would have had a chance to see things in any other way. Aunt Carter hasn't been in society since Washington became so extravagant. She says it is such bad taste—you see, we're all poor in Virginia."

"And you find this agreeable?"

"Agreeable! It's fascinating. When all your life you have known everybody in the county for eight generations—everybody you could be expected to know, I mean—every minute of this is exhilarating. Everyone that you know comes here. One of Mrs. Delano's afternoons may bring together Ammon Bey and the latest escaped missionary from Armenia, the Russian Ambassador and the Japanese Minister. And then we have to try to make them all talk!"

"I envy you your fortune," said the Spaniard gaily. "You have the game of diplomacy to play, with none of the penalties. Compare with your lot my responsibility that is over-weighty for my years, and my ennui, which is a thing difficult to support."

"Ennui! You should have come here from Virginia," said Miss Talbot solemnly.

"It is surely Virginia that I have lacked. Be pitiful to me, Miss Talbot, talk to me. Until now there has met me no young American girl of whom—while yet in Madrid—I have dreamed. In place of witticisms always the banal——"

"If you mean the girls you meet everywhere, they're too rich to be original." Miss Talbot lifted her pretty chin scornfully. "You should know some of the girls I know. There's Edith Barton; she has already had seventeen things returned from every one of the magazines. And Helen Beverly is studying medicine—that's pretty extreme, though——"

"And you?" asked Mendoza, with quite enough seriousness.

"No, I'm not a bit clever. Isn't all this interesting, the light, the color? Look at that group over there!"

"It is, then, the painting!" with the triumphant air of the discoverer. "Yes, it is a good bit of *genre*. A little too much the expected, to be sure—the Eastern background for the Oriental young lady——"

"If I could only paint the things I see, and as I feel them!" the girl burst out. "Now, that's stupid of me—but somehow I always do talk about it. I can't help it. I do wish I could study. I would give my life to it."

"But surely no, it would not be permitted. So much beauty, so much grace, it should be held to make exquisite the home of some man who could understand. Never would I—never would the men of my country—suffer so lovely a flower to give out its perfume to the unthanking, base many——"

"You will have to be here a long time," said Miss Talbot, laughing, "before you become a bit American."

"For the women with harsh voices"—Mendoza's pet detestation—"I say, yes, with rejoicing, but not for one like you. You should be cherished, surrounded with the beautiful, an adorer's fortune laid at your feet." Even as he enjoyed the aroma of his own sentiment he reflected on the proportion of debts in the fortune he, the champion of Spanish chivalry, could lay at any woman's feet, and smiled in inward appreciation of himself. His voice was none the less sweet.

"Oh, Miss Talbot!" cried Mrs. Delano, sweeping in, "won't you leave your post for a moment? Here's the whole Montana delegation coming in, and I have forgotten the names of every one of them. I'm sorry to interrupt, but—" She hurried back, the frills of her gown following her in long undulations.

"Will not the *señorita* be very weary?" asked Mendoza, as Miss Talbot prepared to follow her hostess. "No? Until we meet again, then—and that we shall do."

II

THE season was a month older. There had been receptions for the general, dinners for the elect, and dances for the younger set. It was the last Thursday before Lent. In another week the social spasm would be over. Anything so ephemeral, however, left no trace on the staid old quarter of the city where the Carters lived.

Early in the afternoon Mrs. Carter's delicately lined face appeared at the door of Miss Talbot's room. She looked on with eyes of wistful affection as her niece's deft fingers twisted up her mass of burnished hair, pulled, patted the soft coils until they accentuated the distinction of her head and made a frame of light and shade for the fresh beauty of her face. The older woman moved near to her as Grace put on her gown, and made pretense of assistance that she might pass her hands lovingly over the firm shoulders and rounded arms. Then Mrs. Carter hesitated a moment with a suggestion of something unsaid.

"Am I quite right, Aunt Carter?" Grace asked, as she turned from a final survey in the glass. There was a faint rose in her cheeks, and her eyes were bright with expectancy.

"I can find no fault," Mrs. Carter said fondly. There was an uneasy pause while Miss Talbot put on her hat. Then the girl laughed aloud.

"Out with it, Aunt Carter! You might as well."

"I wish you wouldn't go so much to Mrs. Delano's, dear."

"Why, I didn't dream you objected! It's so interesting to me—and—anyway, this is the last day."

The lady heaved a gentle sigh of relief. Then, "And Mr. Mendoza?" she said.

Her niece flushed. "Who has been gossiping about him?"

"Nobody has been gossiping, dear," Mrs. Carter hastened to explain. "Some man at the club told your cousin he haunted you, wherever he met you. I—don't see why he doesn't come here. No gentleman in my day ever thought

of making a young lady conspicuous abroad without presenting himself for the approval of her family."

Grace smiled a little constrainedly.

"Men had to humble themselves to aspire to the favor of this little lady, didn't they? But you know, dear, that isn't the European custom. If he did that it would be equivalent, in his own eyes, to a demand for an alliance. And—of course, there is no thought of anything—like that." She smiled again. "And I would never ask him to call, you know," she said proudly.

"And—Bob?" queried the little lady delicately.

Grace flushed, angrily this time. "Bob has no right to object," she said quickly.

Mrs. Carter stood irresolutely a moment; then she went up to her niece and kissed her.

"Very well, my dear," she said, with quiet confidence.

Mrs. Delano's last reception was the most brilliant of the year. Her old black butler bowed in and out the never-ending stream of callers with constantly increasing empressement. Miss Talbot had not one moment for thought. In all that crowd she could hardly be expected to observe the absence of one individual. She had become accustomed to the social business of an official afternoon. Mrs. Delano couldn't do without her. There was the usual horde of women, feverishly bent on getting through their calling-list before Lent—these merely required to have their entrances and exits expedited. The legislative people had to be sorted out, each one disposed of according to his own social stratum. The diplomats must be entertained. Miss Talbot had to use her French to amuse a South American youth who "was a little weary of too much English names and idioms," as he confessed to her; she was expected to put a certain naval officer—whose disgust with things mundane had become chronic—into a good humor; there was the usual delegation of constituents to be managed into a social possibility and sent

home conscious of having shone. No, there was no time for thought—and yet Grace did sometimes glance involuntarily toward the door when an unusually tall man appeared above the crowd. And as the afternoon wore on and Mendoza did not appear, a dreary undercurrent of feeling spoiled her bright enjoyment of it all. For a time the quick give-and-take, the stimulating necessity of tact, held her interest; but when the rooms began to thin, the tension relaxed and she admitted to herself that it was all very stupid.

Here and there a late caller had settled himself for the intimate parting chat with one of the many pretty girls assisting, a talk which always gathers point from the knowledge that it would have been impossible a few minutes earlier. On other Thursdays Mendoza had been the last to go. Grace felt suddenly dull and deserted. There was evidently no need of her. She found it impossible to stay. Without waiting for the general breaking up she slipped upstairs, hurried on her wraps, and in a moment was standing at the head of the carpeted flight of steps, gazing a trifle helplessly up and down the street.

Her cab had been ordered quite half an hour later. The snow, which had been falling earlier in the afternoon, giving ironical promise of sleighing, had turned, in Washington's own irritating fashion, into a melancholy drizzle, changing the crisp snow into a yellow slush and making the streets almost impassable. Miss Talbot felt quite pathetically uncared for. She was just debating whether she would re-enter the house and telephone for a cab or have one of the footmen who were waiting, huddled under the awning, call one, when a tall, broad-shouldered figure alighted from a brougham which had just driven up at full speed. It was Mendoza, looking warm and rich-hued, tiny mist-drops powdering his thick black hair and Vandyke beard. Grace felt a sudden joyous glow, a swifter marching of the blood at the sight of him. The afternoon assumed the interest it had lost. Mendoza

quicken his step as he saw her and bowed his shapely head over her hand.

"But you surely are not going? I have been detained by a wearisome happening, but I cannot support to live without my vision of you," he said.

"You are just in time to call a cab for me," smiled Miss Talbot.

Mendoza looked surprised for an unguarded fraction of a moment. A daring possibility occurred to him. He hesitated. In his own country it would be an unheard-of thing; and here, too, where, secure in unimpeachable chaperonage, there lay in wait for him that fateful, inevitable young lady with a large portion. But Miss Talbot—she was different. She was here—alone. He wanted to rescue her from this atrociously disagreeable weather and surround her with comfort of his own providing. His carriage lamps glowed warmly through the early darkness. Would it be more unpardonable to ask or to fail to do so? These Americans, with their clashing social systems, made life very difficult for a foreigner lacking inspiration. A sudden recklessness seized him.

"May I not have the honor of conducting you myself?" he asked ceremoniously.

"Why, yes, thank you; then I won't have to wait." Miss Talbot spoke with entire unconcern.

Mendoza winced at her ready acquiescence. As he helped her into the carriage with the care that one accords to a helpless invalid, in spite of himself Bradley's slighting remark came to his mind—not *comme il faut*. How much did Gordon-Bradley mean—or how little? Was this camaraderie quite? Then his chivalry rebelled and took up arms for the girl beside him; his knowledge of human nature, too, passed judgment on the pure profile, the proud uplift of head. He was angry with himself for the passing doubt. Grace felt the increased deference of his attitude.

Outside it was inexpressibly dreary. The girl shivered as she glanced through the clouded window and nestled deeper

into her corner. Mendoza folded the robes around her with concern. He did it so deftly, so beautifully, she told herself with a sigh—Bob always fumbled. Grace was quiet, conscious of being taken care of.

His whole vital being seemed very near. The richness of his coloring, the glow of his eyes charmed her. To the Spaniard, too, this intimate seclusion appealed with unforeseen strength. Grace was very tired; she lay back among the cushions, comfortably inert. The child in this woman, who had always seemed to him so brilliant and self-reliant, stirred him. The lashes made soft shadows under her eyes, her lips were sweet in a half-smile of content. He felt it necessary to remind himself that she was not the one who could restore the fortune of the Mendozas—and also that she was an American young lady, to be respected. Her beauty aroused something in him ignored since the romance of his first youth; he felt joyous, thrilled.

Grace was conscious of a change in his attitude. She gave herself a little shake and began to make conversation.

"Did you see the work of the Japanese artists at the Corcoran? You know I told you not to miss it."

"Yes, but it was not until yesterday," he said absently.

"I am sorry; the best things had been sold."

"Yes, truly, they say the little Japs went away carrying with them much wealth. That is because they were made the—'fad' is the word, is it not?"

"Oh, Mr. Mendoza!" Grace sat up straight and indignant. "You know that isn't the reason. Their work is wonderful."

"I was much mistaken. It is quite as you say," said the Spaniard, idly watching the color rise in her face. "It is the atmosphere of the Orient they catch; here you see all in a too clear light—it is hard. Could you but see the flower country of Japan!"

"Oh, if I could!" The girl pressed her hands together and her cheeks were crimson. "I might paint if I knew something of the world. If I were only

a man!" she cried passionately. "But women are so helpless."

"But if you were a man," said Mendoza lightly, "the men of your acquaintance would not be so helpful."

"Men?—what could men do?" she said half scornfully. "In such things women must work for themselves."

"Women have been—helped." Mendoza was struggling with a desire to laugh.

"Oh, how—tell me how. I know there are ways; I'd do anything, anything!"

Mendoza started, scrutinizing her keenly. Then he shrugged his shoulders. How difficult it was to understand American women—even this one.

"I wish I could tell you, but I can only tell you what you should see. It is the color of it all, the Southern warmth that forces the art spirit everywhere. If you could see, too, the vivid blues and whites and violet shadows of Tangier as I have seen them, and the rich, subdued half-tones of old Spain, hear the music, see the flowers everywhere, feel the glorious thrill of careless life that is in the air! I am glad when I think that I shall know it again this summer——"

"You are going—and I can't! Don't talk about it! It's the dream of my life, and it's hopeless."

The Spaniard's face flushed. Back in his consciousness was the sting of Bradley's phrase. He didn't want to believe it—there was even regret in the eyes that rested on the unconscious girl—for a moment. Then he bent forward very deliberately and watched her intently as he spoke.

"That is where you should be, not in this gray America; you should live where warmth and fragrance are in the air, where love is swift and free and passionate." He paused. Grace's eyes were fixed on him in a painful fascination. She sighed wistfully, and he was carried out of himself. Prudence? In front of him was a girl's face with crimson cheeks and eyes brilliant with feeling. He leaned forward.

"Come with me; let us go into the

heart of the beauty—together!" His hand fell heavily on hers, lying helpless on the carriage rug.

With a sigh Grace awakened. She looked at the man as curiously as if she saw him for the first time. The face spoke a new language to her which she did not understand. And she was sick with physical repugnance. The flame went out of her face. Suddenly she spoke.

"Stop the carriage, please!"

There was a moment of silence. At last Mendoza saw. The Mendozas had always been gentlemen, even when not of a scrupulous morality. He must save her from a knowledge of his meaning—for once he did not count the cost. Insensibly all that was evil in his face merged into an expression of respectful adoration.

"Let the old stock of the Mendozas welcome a beautiful American bride," he pleaded—and the touch of extravagance was not unbecoming. Without giving her time to think he hurried on: "I love you, I thought not to tell you now, but it seems tonight that I must speak. Give your love to me—my beautiful Northern lily touched with flame! Then would there be for you my life's devotion, and for me—so much more. For me, your eyes to wonder at, your lips to love, yourself to cherish, close, close in the core of my heart!"

A mighty sense of relief swept over her—a relief from some terror only vaguely apprehended. She was conscious of nothing but relief. The mellow voice went on. The torrent of his words at last aroused her, and she turned to look at him. She realized the distinction of his presence. He sought her eyes, pale with anxiety; she told herself he had the perfection and delicacy of line of a fine etching. All was admirable—the figure so finely proportioned that only the grace was evident, the noble poise of the head, the clear line of the heavy eyebrows with their sharp, sensitive turn just above the bridge of the nose. Bob would seem uncouth beside him. But Bob was different—oh, yes, dear Bob was very

different. And at the thought of him another feeling stole over her, warm, comfortable. When she raised her eyes to Mendoza again they were very cold.

"May I have some hope of your love?" he was saying.

"Oh, no, Mr. Mendoza, it is impossible!" She was vaguely surprised at herself. This was not what she had imagined herself replying to him when he—spoke.

"Can you not think that there may be some hope for me?" he asked humbly. "Believe me, I could make you happy. I would know how to do it better perhaps than a man of more worth. And I would be not altogether ill to live with," he added, with a faint smile.

Grace's tender heart began to reprove her.

"Oh, Mr. Mendoza," she said, "please don't—you make me feel like a criminal. Indeed, I realize the honor you have done me."

Mendoza flinched. "No, no," he broke in in a low tone, "you must not say that!"

"I can't tell you how sorry I am!" She was almost in tears.

"The regret must be only for me," he said tenderly. He watched her a moment with painful anxiety. Finally he said, with deliberation:

"If I had said this to you yesterday, would you then have answered as you have done?"

The girl blushed furiously and looked away from him, but she answered softly:

"No; it would have been different then."

He was silent a long time before he asked, with an effort:

"Can you tell me why you have so changed?"

Grace looked at him with her candid eyes.

"I'm ashamed to say it—it seems so childish. Somehow this evening you were—different. I don't understand myself."

The man gave a great sigh. And then a shadow fell over his face.

"Ah," he said, "then I have indeed lost much!"

It was the girl who broke the silence. She had been staring through the rain-spattered window with dim eyes. At last she touched his arm timidly.

"This is my home," she said.

Mendoza gave the signal. The horse was pulled up with a sudden jar that threw her against him. He steadied her with distant courtesy and helped her to the ground in silence. A man was opening the gate of the little garden just in front of them. In the wet, luminous darkness Mendoza could see that he was square, burly, and—
young, oh, yes, undeniably young.

"Bob!" cried Miss Talbot. "Oh, Bob!" And her voice broke a little on the name.

"There is, then, another man!" said Mendoza to himself. And at the same moment he was filled with regret because of the awkward contretemps. The man turned and saw them. But the suspicion, the jealous rage, that the Spaniard expected to see were not there. In the gesture with which he held out both his hands to draw the girl to him, Mendoza had a vision of what he had lost—and what the other man had gained.

Mendoza, bareheaded in the chilling rain, watched them climb the steps slowly and vanish into the glow of the open door. Then he stepped into his brougham. For a long time he sat staring blankly in front of him. Still staring, he groped mechanically in his pockets for his cigarette-papers and tobacco-pouch, produced them and rolled a cigarette with infinite pains. Only when the first few puffs had filled the carriage with the fragrance he loved did his face relax. Then he said bitterly to something within himself:

"She would have loved me!"

He smiled very gently at the dream which seemed to stretch before his half-closed eyes.

"It would have been something to work for," he nodded to the fancy.

A tapping of many fingers on the window-panes aroused him, and he

looked out. The rain had changed to sleet, which whipped the air in long, slanting lines made luminous by the street lights. A queer smile tugged at the corners of Mendoza's mouth.

"How beautiful is this pure sentiment in me of many debts! I kneel in contrition before the spirits of the Mendozas." He smoked a few moments in silence. "I surprised myself much more than the lady," he thought. "American young ladies, they say, receive many offers of marriage"—a gleam of humor shot across his face—"but this one had more reason to be surprised than she knew."

His mood darkened again, and he sat frowning at the point of his cigarette with somber eyes. The carriage drew up to the curb in front of his hotel. As he got out he tossed the half-burned cigarette away.

"Where, I demand of myself, would have been found the means to support the existence I so generously laid at her incomparable feet? Mendoza, thou wert protected by the genius of gamblers! And I fear—yes, it is true—I am late for that dinner with the aunt of Miss Dearborn. Alas, that it is tonight that I must meet the rich Miss Dearborn!"



THE SOUTH WIND

HERALD of blissful summertide come I; 3
 I wander by,
 Singing of sweetest things the June day knows—
 Love and the rose.

JOHN VANCE CHENEY.



VERY DIFFERENT

"DID Miss Manywinters tell you how old she was?"
 "Yes, but not how old she is."



A PARADOX

BINKS—It may sound strange, but my near relatives are also distant ones.
 JINKS—Impossible!
 "Not at all. They are all rich."

THE GIRL AND THE MAN

By Henry Wood

BERTHA had caught only a glint of the diamond-set fob as it dangled complacently from the waistcoat-pocket of the corpulent man. But that glint had pierced to the very core of the somnolent but inflammable passion within her. It released, as it were, a cataclysm of pent-up forces.

She was suddenly seized with a great shivering weakness. Her temples throbbed with the fierce rush of hot blood. Her heart seemed to melt away within her, leaving a cavernous, sickening void behind. Her knees trembled, her fingers grew cold and shriveled, and her head swam as though caught in some whirling, dizzying rush. And through it all, only one thought stood out clear and strong, one great, wild desire: Oh, but to feel the cool, caressing kiss of that living stone, clasped tightly within her own small, deft hands!

This thought was as a lifeline thrown out to save her, and the next instant she emerged from the engulfing, enervating flood of passionate desire as cool as an expert swimmer. She became deliberate, concentrated and calculating; perfectly self-poised. But the effort it had cost her! She was still weak within from the struggle of it as she closed up behind the man, but outwardly she was seemingly unconscious of his presence.

Fortunately the street was too crowded there for her work, and it gave her time to recover herself. But at the next corner an open field lay before her. Save for herself and the man the sidewalk was deserted. Still better, a cab was standing idly by the curb. Of course the cabman would

see her. But cabmen are to be trusted, especially if the girl is pretty—and Bertha was.

Stepping close behind the man, she gave a tremulous little "Oh!" At the same time, with an agonized gesture she clasped one dainty hand to her forehead and one over her heart. The corpulent man wheeled, just as she had known he would, and she tottered forward, collapsing limply in his arms. Encumbered as those two members at once became for him, she saw to it that her own remained free. She even saw to it that the arm next to him nestled perpendicularly over his waistcoat-pocket. With the instinct of an animal watching its prey, she anticipated to a second his first moment of confusion, when he should gaze distractedly about for help. In that brief moment her hand folded deftly over the fob. There was an all but imperceptible wrench and the watch slipped from its pocket. Her hand bent back, the glittering gold case swung like a pendulum against her wrist, her clutch loosened, and fob and all slipped into her sleeve. A wave of cool, intense satisfaction swept over her at that moment.

This essential step successfully accomplished, Bertha proceeded methodically to the next. Languidly she opened her eyes, just as the man, recovered from his sudden obsession, glanced down. The sight that met her gaze was not as comforting as the one he beheld. For he saw only a fair face resting against his arm, while Bertha beheld a policeman, indolently patrolling his beat half a block away. He had not seen her yet, but he was

approaching. It therefore became incumbent upon her to intrude on the pleasing reverie with which the sight of her face had inspired the portly man.

Simulating a little shiver of recovery, she struggled to her feet, one hand—the hand which concealed the watch and fob—clasped to her eyes as though to shut out a great dizziness. The other hand groped forward toward the cab. She had not mistaken her man. Dull-witted as corpulent men are supposed to be, he divined her suggestive move instantly. With a heavy amplitude of motion, he assisted her inside the door, where she sank gratefully upon the cushioned seat.

Screened from annoying observation, and with the self-complacent policeman still a quarter of a block away, Bertha decided that she might with propriety and safety rise to the courtesies of the occasion. Her first step was to give the man a bewitching smile.

"I can never thank you enough," she protested deprecatingly. "It was so odd. I felt a little dizzy. It frightened me so that I screamed. Did I scream loudly?" She did not wait for an answer. "Then I toppled right over. But now I am all right, thanks to your kindness," she added brightly.

"No thanks needed," assured the corpulent man heartily. "Just give me your number, miss, and I'll have you sent right home."

"Forty-ninth and Euclid," she responded, the first address which flashed into her mind. It pleased Bertha immensely that he did not insist upon accompanying her. Such situations are always awkward.

The corpulent man repeated the number and the cabman tightened his reins. Had the man been a perfectly poised gentleman, he would have raised his hat, bowed politely and retired. But he was not. He was only a corpulent man, and it embarrassed him not to know just what to do. So, like most men when embarrassed, he shifted a hand to his waistcoat-pocket. He found it empty. His face underwent a contortion of bewilderment,

succeeded by a flash of enlightenment. Although the change had been instantaneous the cabman had not failed to catch its full significance. He had no embarrassment as to how he should retire. His whip cracked across the back of his animal like the snap of a firecracker. But his ardor defeated him. In that brief lull, when the horse stood for an instant stricken motionless by surprise, the corpulent man wrenched open the door. As the horse at last leaped to the lash, he sank puffing into the seat opposite Bertha, his hat awry and his face flushed and excited. Mechanically he began to arrange his disordered clothes. Bertha, with the remembrance that the policeman was still within hailing distance, felt no desire to hurry him. Besides, she needed time in which to formulate her role.

This she quickly did. As the cab swayed from side to side under the impetus of its speed, she recalled that the address she had given was in an aristocratic part of the city. Of necessity she could be nothing but a society woman. Fortunately, she was dressed for the part.

She waited until the man had sufficiently collected himself to look up. Then with a cold, stony glare she examined him from foot to head. Looking him squarely in the eyes, her eyebrows arched in astonishment, she began to speak. She put accents into each word that transformed them into venomous darts.

"I am greatly indebted to you," she began slowly and icily, "and I can see no reason why the debt should be increased. I believe I told you I am quite recovered. I am certain I shall have no occasion for further assistance."

The coldness which she had instilled into her words and manner was not wasted on the man. Such effrontery left his face congealed with amazement. It took him fully a moment to thaw, and then the blood swept over his massive face.

"Indebted to me?" he blurted. "Well, I should say you are! You're

indebted to me for about one watch and fob. Now, if you want to save trouble, you'll pony them right——"

She did not let him finish. "Sir!" She was the embodiment of shocked surprise. "May I ask the occasion of this outrageous outburst—this insult?"

Her eyes were flashing and her manner grew colder every instant. But the corpulent man was now too torrid to congeal again.

"I mean just what I say," he snarled, thrusting his great red face almost into hers. His manner might easily have cowed a man.

"But I fail utterly to grasp what that meaning might be." She was showing a tinge now of injured innocence.

The man glared at her dumfounded. It was almost past his belief. Still, he was something of a bully himself.

"See here," he exclaimed in exasperation, "don't try any of your bamboozling on me. When you tumbled into my arms back there you nipped my watch and chain. That's what I mean."

Bertha was not even injured now. She was simply groping in the dark. "Nipped? Nipped?" she murmured in a puzzled tone. "I don't understand."

It was too much for a man of such embonpoint. He rose majestically from his seat, crushing his stiff hat into the top of the cab. Bertha inwardly writhed in her attempt to remain, with this spectacle before her, a woman of good breeding. But she repressed the peal of laughter, while the man fairly thundered his denunciation at her: "I mean you stole them, that's what I mean." He sank back on the cushion, red, perspiring and exhausted.

For a moment Bertha gazed at him as wonderingly as a babe at the moon. Then, as if the awfulness of the accusation had at last pierced her understanding, she arose in the fulness of her womanly dignity and anger. The man, bully that he really was, cowered beneath her contracted eyes, her tilted head and her hissing speech.

"Sir," she exclaimed, "I have taken

the last indignity from you that I shall submit to. You have used offensive language before me. You have insulted me as no one but a coward and a brute, alone with a defenseless woman, would dare to do. I should call a policeman instantly. But I won't. You shall stay in this cab until we have reached my home. There, if you wish, you can make your charge to my husband, as any gentleman would have done in the first place."

She was leaning halfway across the cab and there was a scorn in her voice that brought beads of perspiration to the forehead of the corpulent man.

It acted on him as a sedative. He eyed the woman critically. Perhaps, after all, he had made a mistake, or had at least been too hasty. She was faultlessly gowned, and to him she had an air of good breeding. Also he had no fancy for an encounter with her husband. But the remembrance of his wrong cankered within him. He was about to speak, when the sudden grating of the wheels against the curbstone stopped him. The sight of a pretentious stone house was still further disconcerting. Still, he was not a man to be cowed entirely by appearances.

"Perhaps you would not mind accepting my arm again," he sneered, with exaggerated courtesy.

To his amazement she slipped her hand within the proffered arm. As a matter of fact, the sight of that stone house had disconcerted Bertha also. It made her feel the inadequacy of her little impersonation, should she be called upon to maintain it before more critical eyes. Then, too, that fine, passionate frenzy which had first prompted her act had now entirely died out. In fact, it had begun to flicker the instant she had felt the watch safe within her sleeve. She had stolen only from an irresistible impulse to steal. Now that the impulse was gratified she had no further desire for the watch itself.

Recovering from his surprise at Bertha's acceptance of his arm, the corpulent man could not refrain from a retaliating blow. "You're not feeling

faint again, I hope," he mockingly inquired, lifting his disengaged hand to his waistcoat-pocket suggestively.

It was too much for Bertha. The blood flushed to her face. Her woman's nature revolted at this coarse bullying. She was seized with a determination to humble him. He was so sure, so insultingly sure. She would show him yet. She smiled to herself. It was so easy; so easy, in fact, that it almost took away the zest.

The man's broad expanse of waistcoat protruded past the edge of his coat. As her hand lay on his arm, she had but to open her fingers and they touched his waistcoat-pocket, the pocket opposite the one in which the watch had first reposed. She dropped her arm slightly, the watch slipped into her hand, thence into his pocket, as with some of his own sneer she remarked: "As my husband is a gentleman, he will not feel it necessary to challenge you to a duel."

They had reached the door, where the man, with a mocking smile of officiousness, rang the bell. But Bertha failed to weaken, as he had anticipated. Instead she smiled sweetly and asked: "May I trouble you for the time?"

It was said so naturally and yet the query was so absurd that the man in his perplexity raised both hands to his waistcoat-pockets. The next instant

Bertha could have toppled him over with a finger. His face flushed red, and then redder. The perspiration started from his forehead in streams, and rolled down his huge cheeks. He blinked at Bertha helplessly.

"Well, by gad!" he at last blurted out. "Did you ever? I put my watch in the wrong pocket. Never did such a trick before in my life. And here I've been ac—ac—accus—" His face blanched and he floundered painfully. "Say," he begged piteously, "it won't be necessary for me to see your husband now, will it? It was all a blamed mistake."

Bertha was smiling down at him with the forgiving benignity of a saint.

"You were so kind and gentlemanly in assisting me on the street," she said, "that I could not think of holding you responsible for a natural mis—"

But she was not allowed to finish. At that instant the door-knob clicked from within. It acted like a pistol shot on the corpulent man. With a quick, apprehensive glance at Bertha, he wheeled and fairly flew down the steps. As the door opened Bertha caught a glimpse of him plunging frantically into the cab. Then she turned to the trim maid at the door.

"My good girl," she began patronizingly, "can you tell me if Mr. Belamy lives here?"

A HALF LOAF BETTER THAN NO BREAD

"WHY does Puttyman look so pleased when people call his wife his 'better half'?"

"He is so grateful that they don't call her the whole thing."

REGRETS

MRS BATES—I gave a card-party last week.

MRS. COMSTOCK—I understand that most of those who were invited sent their cards.

TOPSY-TURVYS

By Calvin Johnston

I

CLARA, I am deeply chagrined in receiving this statement from your milliner to find that the price of your last hat was only fifty dollars. If economy should become necessary I will cut down the amount I spend for cigars and other foolish extravagances, but I am unwilling that my wife should be reduced to the shabby makeshift of a fifty-dollar hat. It would pain me beyond measure if I felt that you had the least hesitancy in coming to me for funds as often as you want them. Here is a small bunch of bills, which I will not take the trouble to count. Use them as you please; only, do not offend me by referring to this incident the next time I insist upon giving you money.

II

No, I don't look upon it in the light of losing her. Marriage doesn't dissolve the ties of kinship, and the fact that someone else supports her won't make her any the less our daughter. We didn't expect her to be an old maid and always stay at home. What do you suppose we've skimped and sacrificed for if it wasn't to give her the opportunity to win out on the right kind of a husband? Now, my boy, I've got an important engagement and you'll have to excuse me. I know what you would say, but there isn't any occasion for it; I'm willing to back her judgment. You are as good, if not a better, proposition than we could have reasonably expected, and we're all tickled over it. If you don't treat her right that's going to be your misfortune, for she isn't her mother's daughter for nothing. I want to catch that next car. Bless you both, and drop in again.

III

HUSBAND (*taking his morning departure*)—Have you any shopping errand for me today, dear?

WIFE—Yes, there is something I want you to attend to, the worst way, but I can't think of it, and there is your car. How provoking!

HUSBAND—I'll wait for the next one. By running a few blocks when I get to town I can reach the office on time, and the exercise will do me good. You don't know how my half-hour for luncheon drags when you fail to intrust me with some little commission. If you get careless about remembering them I will have to tie a string on your finger, so that you can think to jot them down when they occur to you during the day.

IV

HELP yourself to another piece of cake, Freddie; I always like to see you display a hearty appetite when we have company. Otherwise our guests might think we were accustomed to luxuries.

Oh, thank you! thank you, mama! but I really do not care for it. I know it is not best for me to overload my stomach and, besides, there might not be enough to go around.



AS EVERYONE KNOWS

"YOU'VE got to advertise to succeed," said the successful one.

"Yes," returned the other, "and you've got to succeed like the dickens to keep on advertising."



HEARD ON THE VERANDA

"JACK?"

"Yes, dear."

"Can't you turn that cigar light down a little?"



OWED TO THE DRESSMAKER

MRS. GATES—My new dress is a poem.

MRS. YATES—I understand that poetry is rarely paid for.



"DID she take him for better or worse?"

"That depends on whether you are talking to her family or to his."

THE TRAVELING THIRDS

By Gertrude Atherton

THE California cousin of the Lyman T. Moultons—a name too famous to be shorn—stood apart from the perturbed group, her feet boyishly asunder, her head thrown back. Above her hung the thick white clusters of the acacia, drooping abundantly, opaque and luminous in the soft masses of green, heavy with perfume. All Lyons seemed to have yielded itself to the intoxicating fragrance of its favorite tree.

In the Place Carnot, at least, there was not a murmur. The Moultons had hushed in thought their four variations on the aggressive American key, although perhaps insensible to the voluptuous offering of the grove. Mrs. Moulton, had her senses responded to the sweet and drowsy afternoon, would have resented the experience as immoral; and as it was, her pale blue gaze rested disapprovingly on the rapt figure of her husband's second cousin. The short skirt, and the covert coat of ungraceful length, its low pockets always inviting the hands of its owner, had roused more than once her futile protest, and today they seemed to hang limp with a sense of incongruity beneath the half-closed eyes and expanded nostrils of the young Californian.

It was not possible for Nature to struggle triumphant through the disguise this beneficiary chose to assume, but there was an unwilling conviction in the Moulton family that when Catalina arrayed herself as other women she would blossom forth into something of a beauty. Even her stiff hat half covered her brow and rich brown hair, but her eyes, long and dark and far apart, rarely failed to arrest other

eyes, immobile as was their common expression.

Always independent of her fellow-mortals, and peculiarly of her present companions, she was a happy pagan at the moment, and meditating a solitary retreat to another grove of acacias down by the Saône, when her attention was claimed by Mr. Moulton.

"Would you mind coming here a moment, Catalina?" he asked, in a voice whose roll and cadence told that he had led in family prayers these many years, if not in meeting. "After all, it is your suggestion, and I think you should present the case. I have done it very badly, and they don't seem inclined to listen to me."

He smiled apologetically, but there was a faint twinkle in his eye which palliated the somewhat sanctimonious expression of the lower part of his face. Blond and cherubic in youth, his countenance had grown in dignity as Time changed its tints to drab and gray, reclaimed the superfluous flesh of his face, and drew the strong lines that are the half of a man's good looks. He, too, had his hands in his pockets, and he stood in front of his wife and daughters, who sat on a bench in the perfumed shade of the acacias.

His cousin once removed dragged down her eyes and scowled, without attempt at dissimulation. In a moment, however, she came forward with a manifest attempt to be human and normal. Mrs. Moulton stiffened her spine as if awaiting an assault, and her oldest daughter, a shade more formal and correct, more afraid of doing the wrong thing, fixed a cold and absent eye upon the statue to liberty in

the centre of the Place. Only the second daughter, Lydia, just departing from her first quarter-century, turned to the alien relative with a sparkle in her eye. She was a girl about whose pink-and-white-and-golden prettiness there was neither question nor enthusiasm, and her thin graceful figure and alertly poised head received such enhancement as her slender purse afforded. She wore—need I record it?—a traveling-suit of dark blue brillian-tine, short—but at least three inches longer than Catalina's—and a large hat about whose brim fluttered a blue veil. She admired and a little feared the recent acquisition from California, experiencing for the first time in her life a pleasing suspense in the vagaries of an unusual character. She and all that hitherto pertained to her belonged to that highly refined middle class nowhere so formal and exacting as in the land of the free.

Catalina, who never permitted her relatives to suspect that she was shy, assumed her most stolid expression and abrupt tones.

"It is simple enough. We can go to Spain if we travel third class, and we can't if we don't. I want to see Spain more than any country in Europe. I have heard you say more than once that you were wild to see it—the Alhambra and all that—well, anxious, then," as Mrs. Moulton raised a protesting eyebrow. "I'm wild, if you like. I'd walk, go on mule-back; in short, I'll go alone if you won't take me."

"You will do what?" The color came into Mrs. Moulton's faded cheek and she squared herself as for an encounter. Open friction was infrequent, for Mr. Moulton was nothing if not diplomatic, and Catalina was indifferent. Nevertheless, encounters there had been, and at the finish the Californian had invariably held the field, insolent and victorious; and Mrs. Moulton had registered a vow that sooner or later she would wave the colors over the prostrate foe.

For thirty-two years she had merged, submerged, her individuality, but in

these last four months she had been possessed by a waxing revolt, of an almost passionate desire for a victorious moment. It was her first trip abroad, and she had followed where her energetic husband and daughters listed. Hardly once had she been consulted. Perhaps, removed for the first time from the stultifying environment of habit, she had come to realize what slight rewards are the woman's who flings her very soul at the feet of others. It was too late to attempt to be an individual in her own family; even did she find the courage she must continue to accept their excessive care—she had a mild form of invalidism—and endeavor to feel grateful that she was owned by the kindest of husbands, and daughters no more selfish than the average; but since the advent of Catalina all the rebellion left in her had become compact and alert. Here was an utterly antagonistic temperament, one beyond her comprehension, individual in a fashion that offended every sensibility; cool, wary, insolently suggesting that she purposed to stalk through life in that hideous get-up, pursuing the unorthodox. She was not only indomitable youth but indomitable savagery, and Mrs. Moulton, of the old and cold Eastern civilization, bristled with a thrill that was almost rapture whenever this unwelcome relative of her husband stared at her in contemptuous silence.

"You will do what? The suggestion that we travel third class is offensive enough—but are you aware that Spanish women never travel even first class alone?"

"I don't see what that has to do with me. I'm not Spanish; they would assume that I was 'no lady' and take no further notice of me; or if they did— Well, I can take care of myself. As for traveling third class, I can't see that it is any more undignified than traveling second, and its chief recommendations, after its cheapness, are that it won't be so deadly respectable as second, and that we'll meet nice, dirty, picturesque, ex-

citable peasants, instead of dowdy middle-class people who want all the windows shut. The third-class carriages are generally big open cars like ours, with wooden seats—no microbes—and at this time of the year all the windows will be open. Now, you can think it over. I am going to invest twenty francs in a Baedeker and study my route."

She nodded to Mr. Moulton, dropped an almost imperceptible eyelash at Lydia, and, ignoring the others, strode off belligerently toward the Place Bellecour.

Mrs. Moulton turned white. She set her lips. "I shall not go," she announced.

"My love!" protested her husband mildly. "I am afraid she has placed us in a position where we shall have to go." He was secretly delighted. "Spain, as you justly remarked, is the most impossible country in Europe for the woman alone, and she is the child of my dead cousin and old college chum. When we are safely home again I shall have a long talk with her and arrive at a definite understanding of this singular character, but over here I cannot permit her to make herself—and us—notorious. I am sure you will agree with me, my love. My only fear is that you may find the slow trains and wooden seats fatiguing—although I shall buy an extra supply of air cushions, and we will get off whenever you feel tired."

"Do say yes, mother," pleaded her youngest born. "It will almost be an adventure, and I've never had anything approaching an adventure in my life. I'm sure even Jane will enjoy it."

"I loathe traveling," said the elder Miss Moulton with energy. "It's nothing but reading Baedeker, stalking through churches and picture galleries, and rushing for trains, loaded down with hand baggage. I feel as if I never wanted to see another thing in my life. Of course I'm glad I've seen London and Paris and Rome, but the discomforts and privations of travel far outweigh the advantages.

I haven't the slightest desire to see Spain, or any more down-at-the-heel European countries; America will satisfy me for the rest of my life. As for traveling third class—the very idea is low and horrid. It is bad enough to travel second, and if we did think so little of ourselves as to travel third—just think of its being found out! Where would our social position be—father's great influence? As for that California savage, the mere fact that she makes a suggestion—"

"My dear," remonstrated her father, "Catalina is a most well-conducted young woman. She has not given me a moment of anxiety, and I think her suggestion a really opportune one, for it will enable us to see Spain and give me much valuable literary material. Of course, I do not like the idea of traveling third class myself, and I only wish I could afford to take you all in the train de luxe."

"You are a perfect dear," announced Lydia, "and give us everything we want. And if we went in the luxe we couldn't see any nice little out-of-the-way places and would soon become blasé, which would be dreadful. Jane at first enjoyed it as much as we did, and I could go on forever. No one need ever know that we went third, and when we are at home we will have something else to talk about except the everlasting Italy and England and Paris. Do consent, mother."

This was an unusual concession, and Mrs. Moulton was a trifle mollified. Besides, if her favorite child's heart was set upon Spain, that dyed the matter with a different complexion; she could defer her subjection of the Californian, and, tired as she was, she was by no means averse to seeing Spain herself. Nevertheless, she rose with dignity and gathered her cape about her.

"You and your father will settle the matter to suit yourselves," she said with that access of politeness in which the downtrodden manifest their sense of injury. "But I have no hesitation in saying that I never before heard a gentlewoman"—she had the true middle class horror of the word "lady"—

"express a desire to travel third, and I think it will be a most unbecoming performance. Moreover, I doubt if anything can make us comfortable; we are reasonably sure to become infested with vermin and be made ill by the smell of garlic. I have had my say, however, and shall now go and lie down."

As she moved up the path, her step measured, her spine protestant, her husband ran after and drew her arm through his. He nodded over his shoulder to his youngest daughter, and Lydia, deprecating further argument, went swiftly off in search of Catalina.

II

"LET us get out and race it," suggested Catalina, but she spoke with the accent of indolent content, and hung over the door of the leisurely train, giving no heed beyond a polite nod to the nervous protests of Mrs. Moulton. That good lady, surrounded by air cushions, which the various members of her attentive family distended at stated intervals, had propped herself in a corner, determined to let no expression of fatigue escape her, and enjoying herself in her own fashion. The material discomforts of travel certainly overbalanced the esthetic delights, but at least she was seeing the Europe she had dreamed of so ardently in her youth. Jane sat in another corner reading a volume of Pater. It was impossible to turn her back on the scenery, for the seats ran from east to west and they were traveling due south, but she could ignore it, and that she did.

They were in a large open car furnished with wooden seats and a door for each aisle. The carriage was not dirty, and all the windows were open; moreover, it harbored, so far, no natives beyond two nuns and a priest, who ate cherries continually and talked all at once with the rapidity of ignited firecrackers and with no falling inflection. The Moultons had taken possession of the last compartment and sat with their backs to the wall, but Cata-

lina, disdaining such poor apology for comfort, had the next to herself, and when not hanging over the door rambled back and forth. Mr. Moulton and Lydia alternately read Baedeker and leaned forward with exclamations of approval.

But although Catalina had responded amiably to Lydia's expression of contempt for Spanish methods of transit, the ambling train suited her less energetic nature and enabled her to study the country that had mothered her own. She stared hard at the blue and tumbled masses of the Pyrenees with their lofty fields of snow glittering in a delicate mist, the same frozen solitude through which Hannibal marched two thousand years ago, longing, perhaps, for the hot brown plain of Ampurdán below, and the familiar murmur of the bright waters that rimmed it. The sun was hot, and all that quivering world of blue shimmered and sparkled and coquetted as if life and not death were its bridegroom. But the Mediterranean, like other seas, is a virago at heart, and only dances and sways like a Spanish beauty when out where there is naught to oppose her; for centuries she has been snarling and clawing the rocky headlands, her white fangs never failing to capture their daily morsel, and never content.

Catalina loved the sea and hated it. Today she was in no mood to give it anything and turned her back upon it, her eyes traveling from the remote, disdainful beauty of the mountains down over the vineyards and villages, leaning far out to catch a last glimpse of that most characteristic object in a Spanish landscape—a huge and almost circular mass of rock rising abruptly from the plain, brown, barren, its apex set with a fortified castle, an old brown town clinging desperately to the inhospitable sides. The castle may be in ruins, but men and women still crawl lazily up and down the perpendicular streets, too idle or too poor to get away from the soil, with its dust of ancestral blood. The descendants of warriors slept and loafed and begged in the sun, thankful for a tortilla a

day and dreading nothing this side of Judgment but the visit of the tax-gatherer. To escape the calls of the remorseless one, many who owned not even a little vineyard on the plain slept in the hollowed side of a hill and made the earth their pillow.

"Brutes!" said Catalina, meaning the Government.

"Why don't they come to America?" asked Lydia wonderingly. "Look at that old woman out in the field. That is the most shocking thing you see in Europe—women in the fields everywhere."

Catalina, indolent in some respects, waged eternal war with the one-sided. "Your factories are far worse," she asserted. "They are really horrible, for the women stand on their feet all day with a ceaseless din tearing at their nerves and never a breath of decent air in their lungs. They are the most ghastly lot I ever saw in my life. These women are always in the fresh air, with the quiet of nature about them, and they rest when they like. I think we are the barbarians—we and the Spanish Government."

"Well, well, don't argue," said Mr. Moulton soothingly. "It is too hot. We have our defects, but don't forget our many redeeming virtues. And as for Spain, backward, tax-ridden, oppressed as she is, one sees nothing to compare with the horrors that Arthur Young saw in France just before 1789. Spain, no doubt, will have her own revolution in her own time; I am told the peasants are very virile and independent. My love, shall I blow up that bag behind your head?"

He examined the other bags, readjusted them, and there being nothing to claim the eye at the moment, read Baedeker aloud, to the intense but respectful annoyance of his eldest daughter and the barely concealed resentment of Catalina, who hung still further over the creaking door.

The train walked into a little station of Tordera and stopped.

"*Cinco minutos!*" said the guard, raising his voice.

"Five!" said Catalina. "That means

fifteen. Let us get out and exercise and buy something."

"Pray be careful!" exclaimed Mrs. Moulton. "I know you will be left. Mr. Moulton, please, please don't get out."

Mr. Moulton patted her amiably and descended in the wake of Catalina and Lydia. They were surrounded at once by beggars, even the babies in arms extending their hands. There were few men among them, but the women, picturesque enough in their closely pinned kerchiefs of red or yellow, were more pertinacious than man ever dared to be. Lydia, fastidious and economical, retreated into the train and closed the door; but Catalina disbursed coppers and gave one dirty little Murillo a peseta. She had spoken almost as much Spanish in her life as English, and exchanged so many elaborate compliments with her retinue, in a manner so acceptable to their democratic taste, that they forgot to beg and pressed close at her heels as she strode up and down, her hands in her pockets, wondering what manner of fallen princess was this who traveled third class and knew how to treat a haughty peasant of Spain as her equal. She was buying an inflammable-looking novel with which to insult Jane, and a package of sweets for Lydia and herself, when she heard a shrill note of anguish:

"Mr. Moulton! Catalina!"

Mingling with it was the drone of the guard: "*Viajeros al tren!*"

The train was moving, the guard having been occupied at the cantina until the last moment. He was singing his song unconsciously on the step of an open door. Catalina saw the frantic whirr of Mr. Moulton's coat-tails as he flew by and leaped into the car. She flung two pesetas at the anxious vender, dropped her purchase into her pockets, and, running swiftly alongside the moving train, made the door easily.

"I could have caught the old thing if it had been half a mile off!" she exclaimed indignantly, as three pairs of hands jerked her within, and Mrs.

Moulton sniffed hysterically at her salts. "And if ever I do get left, just remember that I speak the language and am not afraid of anything."

"Well," said Mr. Moulton tactfully, "just remember that *we* do not speak the language and have need of your services. Suppose we have our afternoon meal? The lunch at the frontier was not all that could be desired."

He produced the hamper and neatly arrayed the top of two portmanteaus with jam and bread and cake. Catalina placed a generous share of these delicacies on a tin plate, and, omitting to explain to her astonished relatives, climbed over the seats and made offering to each of the other occupants of the car. It had half filled at the station, and besides the nuns and priests there were now several Catalan peasants in red caps and black velvet breeches, fine independent men, prepared to ignore these eccentric Americans, ready to take offense at the slightest suggestion of superiority, but enchanted at the act of this unsmiling girl, who spoke their language and understood their customs. They refused, as a matter of course, politely, without servility, and in a moment she returned to her party.

"You must always do that," she informed them, as she set her teeth hungrily into the bread, "and when they offer of theirs you must look pleased with the attention."

Mrs. Moulton sighed, and when a few moments later a peasant vaulted over the seats and proudly offered of his store of black bread and garlic, she buried a frozen smile in her smelling-salts. Jane refused to notice him, but the other three declined with such professions of gratitude that he told his comrades the Americans were not altogether a contemptible race, and that the one who spoke their language looked like a devil with a white soul and was worthy to have been born in Spain. He took out his guitar in a moment and swept the keys with superb grace while the others sang; the nuns in high quavering voices that wandered aimlessly through the rich

tones of the men. After that they talked politics and became so excited that Mr. Moulton was relieved when they all fell out together at Mataro. He could then take notes and enjoy the groves of olives and oranges, the castles and watch towers on the heights, eloquent of Iberian and Roman, Goth and Moor, the turquoise surface of the Mediterranean—never so blue as the Adriatic or the Caribbean—the bold harsh sweep of the coast. Then, as even Catalina began to change her position frequently on the hard seats, and they were all so covered with dust that even the spinster visage of Jane looked like a study in grotesque, the horizon gave up the palaces and palms of Barcelona.

III

TWENTY-THREE years before the opening of this desultory tale its heroine was born on the island of Santa Catalina, a fragment of Southern California. Her father had begun life as a professor of classics in a worthy Eastern college, but, his health breaking down, he betook himself and his small patrimony to the State which electrifies the nerves in its northern half and blunts them in its southern. Jonathan Shore wrote to his cousin, Lyman T. Moulton:

I haven't a nerve left with a point on it; have recovered some measure of health and lost what little ambition I ever possessed. I am going to open an inn for sportsmen on the island of Santa Catalina, so that I shall be reasonably sure of the society of gentlemen and make enough money to replenish my library now and then—my books are on the way. Here I remain for the rest of my natural life.

But he crossed over to Los Angeles occasionally. At a soirée he met the daughter—and only child—of one of the largest landholders in Southern California; and danced with no one else that night. She married the scholarly innkeeper with the blessing of her father, who was anxious to pass his declining years in peace with a young wife. The bride, for coincident if not similar reasons, was glad to move

to Catalina. She was the belle of her time, this Madelina Joyce, and her dark beauty came down to her from Indian ancestors. Her New England great-grandfather had come to California long before the discovery of gold, bought, for a fraction, two hundred thousand acres from the Mexican Government, and married, despite the protests of his Spanish friends, an Indian girl of great beauty, both of face and character.

The Pueblo bride had lived but two years to receive the snubs of the haughty ladies of Santa Barbara, her ardent young husband had shot himself over her grave, and the boy was brought up by the padres of the Mission. Fortunately he came to man's estate shortly before the United States occupation, and managed to save a portion of his patrimony from the most rapacious set of scoundrels that ever followed in the wake of a victorious army. This in turn descended to his son, who, in spite of Southern indolence and a hospitality as famous as his cellar, his liberal appreciation of all the good things of life, and a half-dozen lawsuits, still retained fifty thousand of the ancestral acres, and had given his word to his daughter that they should go to her unencumbered. This promise he kept, and when Catalina was ten years old he died, at good will with all the world. His widow moved to San Francisco with her freedom and her liberal portion, and Mrs. Shore announced that she must give the ranch her personal attention. The ten years had been happy, for the husband and wife loved each other and were equally devoted to their beautiful unsmiling baby. But there were deep wells of laughter in Mrs. Shore, and much energy. She wept for her father, but welcomed the change in her life, not only because she had reached the age when love of change is most insistent, but because she had begun to dread the hour of confession that life on an island, even with the man of one's choice, was insufficient.

Mr. Shore himself was not averse to change so long as it did not take him

out of California, although he refused to sell the little property on the island where he had spent so many happy years.

From the hour Mrs. Shore settled down in the splendid old adobe ranch house she watched no more days lag through her fingers. Attended by Catalina she rode over some portion of the estate every day, and if a horse had strayed or a cow had calved she knew it before her indolent vaqueros. She personally attended, each year, to the sheep-shearing and the cattle-branding, the crops and the stock sales. Once a year she gave a great barbecue, to which all within a radius of a hundred miles were invited, and once a week she indulged herself in the gossip, the shops and the dances of Santa Barbara.

In the vast solitude of the ranch Catalina grew up, carefully educated by her father, petted and indulged by her mother, hiding from the society that sought Mrs. Shore, but friendly with the large army of Mexican and Indian retainers. When she was persuaded by her mother to attend a party in Santa Barbara she rooted herself in a corner and glowered in her misery, snubbing every adventurous youth that approached her. She adored books, her outdoor life, her parents, and asked for nothing further afield.

When she was eighteen her father died. She rode to the extreme confines of the ranch and mourned him, returning to her life at home with the stolidity of her Indian ancestors. Mrs. Shore grieved also, but by this time she was too busy a woman to consort with the past. Moreover, she was now at liberty to take Catalina to San Francisco and give her the proper tutors in languages and music. Incidentally, she made many new friends and enjoyed with all her vivid nature the life of a city which she had visited but twice before. She returned in the following winter and extended her fame as a hostess. Catalina found San Francisco society but little more interesting than that of the South, and enjoyed the reputation of being as rude as she was beautiful. Here, however,

her Indian ancestress had her belated revenge. Her brief and tragic story cast a radiant halo about the indifferent Catalina, whose strain of aboriginal blood was extolled as the first cause in a piquant and original beauty; all her quaint eccentricities—which were merely the expression of a proud and reticent nature anxious to be let alone—were traced to the same artless source, and when one day in the park she sprang from her horse and shook the editor of a personal weekly until his teeth rattled in his head, her unique reputation was secure.

The greater part of the year was spent on the ranch. Mrs. Shore loved the world, but she was a woman of business above all things, and determined that the ranch should be a splendid inheritance for her child. Her time was closer than she knew. In all the vigor of her middle years, with the dark radiance of her beauty little dimmed, and an almost pagan love of mere existence, she was done to death by a bucking mustang, unseated for the first time since she had mounted a horse, and kicked beyond recognition.

Catalina resolutely put the horror of those days behind her, and for several months was as energetic a woman of business as her mother had been. She was mistress of a great tract of land, of herself, her time, her future. When her stoical grief for her mother subsided she found life interesting and stimulating. She rode about the ranch in the morning, or conferred with her lawyer, who drove out once a week; the afternoons she spent in the great court of the old house, with its stone fountain built by the ancestors who had learned their craft from the Mission fathers, its palms and banana trees, its old hollyhocks and roses. Here she read, or dreamed vaguely of the future. What she wanted of life beyond this dreaming Southern land, where only an earthquake broke the monotony, was as vague of outline as her mountains under their blue mists, but its secrets were a constant and delightful well of perplexity. For two years she was contented, and at times,

when galloping down to the sea in the early dawn, the old moon, bony and yellow, sinking to its grave in the darkest cañon of the mountain, and the red sun leaping from the sea, she was supremely happy.

Then, in a night, discontent settled upon her. She wanted change, variety; she wanted to see the world—Europe above all things; and when her Eastern relatives, with whom she corresponded, in obedience to a last request of her father, again pressed her to visit them, and mentioned that they were contemplating a trip abroad, she started on three hours' notice, leaving the ranch in charge of a trusted overseer and the executors of her mother's will.

She found her relatives living in a suburb of New York, their social position very different from that her mother had given her in California. Nothing saved them from the narrow routine of the suburban middle class but the intellectual proclivities of Mr. Moulton, who was reader for a publishing house and the literary adviser of the pseudo-intellectual. Through the constant association of his name with moral and non-sensational fiction, his well-balanced attitude of piety tintured by humor, the pleasant style with which he indited irreproachable and elevated platitudes, his stern and invariable denunciation of the unorthodox in religion, in ideas and in style, and his genially didactic habit of telling his readers what they wished to hear, he had achieved the rank of a great critic. As he really was an estimable man and virtuous husband, of agreeable manners, sufficiently hospitable, and extremely careful in choosing his friends, his position in the literary world was quite enviable. The great and the safe took tea on his lawn, and if the great and unsafe laughed at both the tea and the critic that was the final seal of their unregeneracy.

When Catalina arrived, after lingering for a fortnight in Boston with a friend she had made on the train, she liked him at once, unjustly despised Mrs. Moulton, who was the best of

wives and copied her husband's manuscripts, hated Jane, and recognized in Lydia a human being in whom one could find a reasonable amount of companionship, in spite of the magnetism of the mirror—or even the polished surface of a panel—for her complacent eyes. Lydia was innocently vain, and being the beauty of the family, believed herself to be very beautiful indeed. She always made a smart appearance, and was frankly desirous of admiration. Like many family beauties, she had a strong will and was reasonably clever. When the first opportunity to go to Europe arrived she had reached what she called a critical point in her life. She confided to Catalina that she was becoming morbidly tired of mere existence and hated the sight of every literary man she knew, particularly the young ones.

"Of course, they are more or less the respectable hangers-on that give us the benefit of their society," she said gloomily; "those that scurry about writing little stories for the magazines and weekly papers—it seems to me a real man might find something better to do. We know all the big ones, but they are too busy to come out here often, and father sees them at the Century and Authors' clubs, anyhow. We hardly know a man who isn't a publisher, an editor or a writer of something or other—perhaps an occasional artist. For my part, I'd give my immortal soul to be one of those lucky girls that go to Mrs. Astor's parties; that's my idea of life. If a millionaire would only fall in love with me—or any old romance, for that matter!"

"Have you never been in love?" asked Catalina, afraid of the sound of her own voice, but deeply interested.

"Not the least little bit, more is the pity. I wouldn't mind even being heartbroken for a while."

It was this frankness that endeared her to Catalina. "Jane is third rate, and tries to conceal the fact from herself and others by an affectation of such of the literary galaxy as make

the least appeal to the popular taste, and Cousin Lyman is no critic," she informed herself three days after her arrival. "Cousin Miranda is just one of those American women who are invalids for no reason but because they want to be, and I suppose even Lydia would get on my nerves in time. Thank heaven, when they do I can leave at a moment's notice."

After four months of the friction of travel Catalina had half hoped her relatives would reject her startling proposal and abandon her to a future full of dangers and freedom.

IV

SHE brushed her hair viciously in the solitude of her bedroom in Barcelona; fortunately, the composition of the party always gave her a room to herself.

"Tomorrow morning I'll be up and out before they are awake," she announced to her sulky image. "This evening I suppose I must walk with them on the Rambla. Of course, if I had come alone I should have had to find a chaperon for such occasions, but it would be some quaint old duenna I could hire. I've never wanted my liberty as I do here in Spain, and Cousin Lyman will barely let me wash my own face. I never was so taken care of in my life—"

She ground her teeth, but nodded as Mr. Moulton put his head in at the door and asked her if she were sure she was comfortable, if her room was quite clean and her keys in proper order. Then he adjured her not to drink the water until he had ascertained its reputation, and to be careful not to lean over the railing of the balcony, as it might be insecure; the Spanish were a shiftless people, so far as his observation of them went.

Catalina flung the hair-brush at the door as he pattered down the hall to examine the welfare of his daughters.

"I've a mind to go up and dance on the roof," she cried furiously. "One would think I was four years old.

Papa was just like that when we traveled, and if all American men are the same I'll marry an Englishman."

After dinner Mr. Moulton, having seen his wife safely into bed and conscientiously determined to observe every respectable phase of foreign life, drew Lydia's arm within his, and bidding Catalina take Jane's and follow close behind him, went out upon the Rambla. Upon these occasions he always took his youngest carefully under his wing. A wag had once said of her, while commenting upon the infinite respectability of the Lyman T. Moultons, that on a moonlight night, in a boat on a lake, Lydia might develop possibilities; and it may have been some dim appreciation of these possibilities that prompted Mr. Moulton to favor the beauty of the family with more than her share of attention. But Lydia had a coquettish pair of eyes, and under her father's formidable wing had indulged in more than one innocent flirtation. Catalina raged that she was to take her first night's pleasure in Spain in the companionship of Jane, and ignored her protector's mandate. Jane, whose sense of duty increased in proportion to her dislikes, took a firm hold of the Californian's rigid and vertical arm, and marched close upon her father's heels.

They promenaded with all Barcelona, in the very middle of the Rambla, that splendid avenue of many names above the vaulted bed of the river. For nearly a mile on either side the hotels and cafés and many of the shops and side streets were brilliantly alight. Under the double row of plane trees were kiosks for the sale of newspapers, post-cards of the bull-fight, fans and curios; and passing and repassing were thousands of people. All who were not forced to work this soft Southern night strolled there indolently, to take the air, to see, now and again to be seen. Doubtless there were other promenades for the poor, but here all appeared to have come from the houses of the aristocracy or wealthy middle

class. Many were the duennas, elderly, stout or shrunken, always in black, with a bit of lace about the head, immobile and watchful. Perhaps they towed one maiden, but more frequently a party.

The girls and young matrons were light and gay of attire; occasionally their millinery was Parisian, but more often they wore the mantilla or rebosa. Their eyes were bright, demure, inviting, rarely indifferent; and making up the other half of the throng were officers, students, men of the world, murmuring compliments as they passed or talking volubly of politics and war. Two young aristocrats behind Catalina were laughing over the recent visit of the young king, when, simply by the magic of his boyish personality, eager to please, he had transformed in a moment the most hostile and anarchistic city in his kingdom, determined to show its insolent contempt, into a mob of cheering hysterical madmen. The socialists and anarchists might be sailing their barques on the hidden river beneath; they were forgotten, the mayor hardly dared to show his face, and the women kissed their fingers to the pictures of the gallant little king hanging on every kiosk; the men lifted their hats.

It was the most brilliant and animated picture of outdoor life that Catalina had seen in Europe, and the general air of good breeding, of mingled vivacity and perfect dignity, the picturesque beauty of many of the women, the constant ripple of talk and laughter, the flare of light and the dim shades of the old trees, appealed powerfully to the girl from the most picturesque portion of the United States, in whom scenes of mere fashion and frivolity aroused a resentment as passionate as if fed by envy and privation. She had stood one morning not a fortnight since on a corner of the rue de Rivoli and watched carriage after carriage, automobile after automobile roll round the corner of the Place de la Concorde, each framing women in the extravagant uniform of fashion; American women,

all come from across the sea for one purpose only, the purpose for which they lived their useless idle lives—more clothes. For this they spent two wretched weeks on the ocean every year—the ship's doctor had told Catalina that the pampered American was the most unheroic sailor on the Atlantic—and they looked unnoraml, exotic, mere shining butterflies whose necks would be twisted with one turn of a strong wrist in the first week of a revolution; a revolution of which, unindividual as they were, they would be a precipitating cause. But here there was no exotic class, none but legitimate causes of separation from the masses; it was the charming faces one noted, the lively expression of pleasure in mere living; the garments might be Parisian, but being less than the woman, and worn without consciousness, they barely arrested the eye, and were no part of the picture; as was the mantilla or the rebosa.

Catalina for once hated no one in the world, and even became oblivious of the grip on her arm. She looked about her with the wide curious eyes of youth. Few gave her more than a passing glance, for her stiff hat threw an ugly shadow on her face and every line of her figure was hidden under her loose coat. But she noted that Lydia, who, in the evening, wore a small hat perched coquettishly on her fluffy hair, was receiving audible admiration. Suddenly she glanced out of the corner of her eye at Jane, but that severe virgin was staring moodily at the ground; her head ached and she longed for bed. Mr. Moulton, doing his best to be interested and stifle his yawns, was glancing in every direction but his immediate right, and consequently no one but his pretty daughter, and finally Catalina, noticed the handsome young Spaniard who had established communication with the blue eyes of the north. Finally the youth whispered something in which only the word *adorado* was intelligible to Lydia, who clung to her father's arm with a charming scowl.

"Don't be frightened," whispered Catalina. "They don't mean anything—not like Frenchmen."

Not only was the crowd so great that many a flirtation passed unnoticed, but heretofore Catalina had not observed that the cavalier was companioned. When he whispered to Lydia, however, she saw a man beside him frown and take his arm as if to draw him away, but when she reassured the coquette, this man turned suddenly, his brows still knit but relaxing with a flash of amusement. Then Catalina took note of him and saw that he was not a Spaniard, although nearly as dark as Lydia's conquest. He was an Englishman, she made sure by his expression, so subtly different from that of the American. He might have been an officer from his carriage, and he was extremely thin and walked slowly, rather than sauntered, as if the effort were distasteful or painful. His thin well-bred face looked as if it recently might have been emaciated, but its pervading expression was humorous indifference, and his eyes had almost danced as they met hers. He did not look at her a second time, evidently seeing no profit in the idle flirtations that delighted his neighbors, and Catalina, a trifle piqued, watched him covertly, and decided that he was a nobleman, had been in the Boer War, was doubtless covered with scars and medals.

V

He did not haunt her dreams, however, and she had quite forgotten him as she watched the sunrise next morning from the long ridge of the Montjuich. Her cabman was refreshing himself elsewhere and she had given herself up to one of the keenest delights known to the imaginative and ungregarious mind, the solitary contemplation of nature. She watched the great dusky plains and the jagged whiteness of Montseny's lofty crest turn yellow. Spain is one of those rare dry countries where the very air changes color. The whole valley

seemed to fill slowly with a golden mist, the snow on the great peak and on the Pyrenees beyond glittered like the fabled sands, and even the villas clinging to the steep mountainside, the palaces in their groves of palm trees and citron, orange and pomegranate, all seemed to move and sway as in the depths of shimmering tides. Catalina had the gift to see color in atmosphere as apart from the radiance that falls on sky and mountain, a gift which is said to belong only to people so highly civilized as to be on the point of degeneration. Catalina with her robust youth and brain was well on the hither side of degeneration, but in her lonely life and dislike of human kind she had cultivated her natural appreciation of beauty until it had not only developed her perceptions to acuteness but empowered them, when enchanted, to rise high above the ego.

She stood with her head thrown back, her mouth half open as if to quaff deeply of that golden draught, fancying that just beyond her vision lay all cosmos waiting to reveal itself and the mystery of the eternal. When she heard herself accosted she was bewildered for a moment, not realizing that she was actually in the world of the living.

"You will ruin your eyes, Miss Shore," a calm but genial voice had said. "The scene is worth it, but——"

"How dare you speak to me!" cried Catalina furiously. She advanced swiftly, willing to strike him, not in the least mollified to recognize the Englishman upon whom she had bestowed her infrequent approval the night before.

His eye lit with interest and a pardonable surprise. But he continued imperturbably: "Of course I should not have been so rude as to speak to you if I hadn't happened to know Mr. Moulton rather well. I had a talk with him last night in the hotel, and he was good enough to tell me your name."

"How on earth did you ever know Cousin Lyman?" She forgot her an-

ger. "You are an Englishman and I am sure Cousin Lyman——" She stopped awkwardly, too loyal to continue, but her eyes were large with curiosity. Where could Lyman T. Moulton have known this Englishman, with his unmistakable air of that small class for whose common sins society has no punishment. "He usually knows only literary people," she continued lamely.

"And you are sure I am not!" His laugh was abrupt but as good-natured as his voice. "You are quite right. I can't even write a decent letter. But literary men often belong to good clubs, you know, and one of the most distinguished of our authors happened to bring Mr. Moulton to one of mine. He was over some years ago."

"Oh, I remember." She also recalled the curious boyish pleasure which illumined Mr. Moulton's face whenever he alluded to this visit to England. It had been his one vacation from his family in thirty years.

"What is your name?" demanded Catalina, with an abruptness not unlike his own, but unmodified by his careless good humor.

"Over." Then, as she still looked expectant, "Captain James Brassy Over, if it interests you."

"Oh!" She was childishly disappointed that he was not a lord, never having consciously seen one, then was gratified at her perspicacity of the night before.

"How have I disappointed you?"

"Disappointed me?" Her eyes flashed again. "All men are disappointing and are generally idiots, but I could not be disappointed in a person to whom I had never given a thought."

"Oh!" he said blankly. He was not offended, but was uncertain whether she were affected or merely a badly brought up child. Belonging to that order of men who have something better to do than to understand women, he decided to let her remark pass, and await developments.

"I'm rather keen on Mr. Moulton," he announced, "and have half a mind to join your party. I was going to cut

across to Madrid, but he says you have made out rather a jolly trip down the coast and then in to Granada."

"But we are traveling third class," she stammered with the first prompting of snobbery she had ever known. "We—we thought it would be such an experience."

"So Mr. Moulton told me. I always travel third."

"You? Why?"

"Poverty," he said cheerfully.

Catalina was furious with herself, the more so as she had descended to the level of her cousins, whom she secretly despised as snobs. She did not know how to extricate herself from the position she had assumed, and answered lamely:

"Poverty? You don't look poor."

"Only my debts keep me from being a pauper."

"And you don't mind traveling third?"

"Mind? It's comfortable enough, as comfortable as sleeping on the ground."

Catalina's face illumined. For the first time it occurred to him that she might be pretty. She forgot the awkward subject, and asked eagerly:

"Were you in the Boer War?"

"Yes."

"All through it?"

"Pretty well."

"Do tell me about it. I never before met anyone who had been in the Boer War, and it interested me tremendously."

"There's nothing to tell but what you must have read in the papers."

"I suppose that is an affectation of modesty."

"Not at all. Nothing is so commonplace as war. There is nothing in it to make conversation about."

"But you lost such a dreadful number of officers!"

"We had plenty to spare—could have got along better with less."

His cheerfulness was certainly unaffected. The two pairs of dark eyes watched each other narrowly, his keen and amused, hers with their stolid surface and slumbering fires.

"But you were wounded!" she said triumphantly.

"Never was hit in my life."

"But you have been ill."

"Oh, ill fast enough—rheumatism."

Her eyes softened. "Ah! sleeping on the damp ground."

"No. Drink."

For a moment the sullen fires in Catalina boiled high, then her eyes caught the sparkle in his and she burst into a ringing peal of laughter. She laughed rarely, and when she did her whole being vibrated to the buoyancy of youth.

"Well!" she said gaily. "I hope you have reformed. The Moultons are temperance—rabid—and I had rheumatism once from camping out. I had to set my teeth for a week. Then I went to a sulphur spring and cured it. But I am hungry. Isn't there a restaurant here, somewhere?"

"I was about to suggest a visit to the Café Miramar. It is only a step from here."

A few moments later they sat at a little table on the terrace, and while Captain Over ordered the coffee and rolls Catalina forgot him and stared out over the vast blue sparkle of the Mediterranean; above, the air had drifted from gold to pink—a soft vague pink, stealing away before the mounting sun. She had pushed back her hat and coat, and the soft collar of her blouse showed a youthful column upon which her head was proudly set. She wore no hair on her fine open brow, but the knot at the base of the neck was rich in color. Her complexion, without red to break its magnolia tint, was flawless even in that searching light. Her beautiful eyes were vacant for the moment, and her nose, while delicate, was unclassical, her cheekbones high; but it was her mouth that arrested Over's gaze as the most singular feature he had ever seen. Childishly red, it was sharply cut and resembled—what was it? A bow? Certainly not a Cupid's bow, for that was full and pouting. Then he recalled the Indian bows in the armory at home. That was it—the bow of an Indian bent

sharply in the middle, so sharply that it was really two half-bows the mouth resembled, and absolutely perfect in its drawing, in the tapering sweep of its corners. A perfect mouth is a feature one may read of for a lifetime and never see, however many mouths there be that charm and invite. Pretty mouths are abundant enough, and mouths that indicate lofty or delightful characteristics, but rarely is the mouth seen for which Nature has done all that she so generously does for eyes and profile. But for Catalina she had cut a mouth so exquisite that its first effect was of something uncanny, as of an unknown race, and it further held the attention as indicating absolutely nothing of the character behind.

Catalina dazedly removed her eyes from the sea and met Over's.

"Stop staring at me," she said, with a frown.

He was about to retort that she had been made to be stared at, but it occurred to him in time that he understood her too little to invite her into the airy region of compliment. He had known girls to resent them before, and they were not in his line anyway. He merely replied: "Here comes the coffee. I promise you to give it my undivided attention."

They sat silent for a few moments, keenly appreciating their little repast. Coffee always went to Catalina's head, and when she had finished she felt happy and full of good-fellowship.

"I like you immensely, and hope you'll come with us," she announced. "I'm rather sorry you are not a lord, though. I've never seen one."

"Well, I have a cousin who is one, and if you like to come to England I'll show him to you. He's rather an ass, though, and you'll probably guy him."

"You are not very respectful to the head of your house."

"Oh, he was my fag at school—he's two years younger than I am."

"Is he in the House of Peers?"

"Good Lord, no! That is, he has his seat, of course, but I doubt if he'd recognize Westminster in a photo-

graph. Gaiety girls are his lay. We married him young, though, and assured the succession."

"Is he a typical lord?"

"What's that? We have all sorts, like any other class. I might as well ask you if you were a typical American."

"Well, I'm not!" cried Catalina, with lightning in her eyes. "If Nature had made me a type I'd have made myself over. It makes me hate nearly everybody, but, at least, I love to be alone, and I can always get that when I want it. I've got a big ranch—fifty thousand acres—and after my mother died, two whole years I lived on it alone, never speaking to a soul but my men of business and the servants. That's my idea of bliss, and the moment I strike the American shore I'm going back."

He looked at her with increasing interest—a girl of silences who loved nature and hated man. But he merely said, with his quick smile: "You are a very grand young person indeed. Somerton—my cousin—has only thirty thousand acres. Of course, he's beastly poor—has so much to keep up. I suppose a ranch of that size is pure luxury, and blossoms like the rose."

"Much you know about it. I often have all I can do to make both ends meet. Droughts kill off my cattle and sheep and dry up everything that grows. My Mexicans and Indians are an idle worthless lot, but sentiment prevents me from turning them off—their grandparents worked on the ranch. It makes me independent, of course, but I really am what is called land poor. I'm thinking of dividing a part of it into farms and selling them, and also of selling some property I have on Santa Catalina, which has become fashionable. Then I should be quite rich. Mother could get work out of anybody, but I am not nearly so energetic, and they know it. But I am so happy when I am there, and need so little money for myself that I haven't thought about it heretofore. Being over here has taught me the value of money, and I want to

come back to Europe before long. Then I'll come alone and stay several years. There is so much to learn, and I find I know next to nothing. Well, let us go. As long as I am with the Moultons I suppose I must consider them, and they probably think I have been kidnapped. Who was that youth you were walking with last night?"

"The Marquis Zuñiga. I met him at the club and we strolled out together. I introduced him to Mr. Moulton and he will call this afternoon—is quite bowled over by your golden-haired cousin. I suppose we can drive back together? It would look rather absurd, wouldn't it, going down in a procession of two?"

VI

THEY were to have remained in Barcelona a week, but Mr. Moulton, alarmed at the impassioned devotion of Zuñiga to Lydia, decided to leave on the morning of the fourth day.

"That will be just six hours before Zuñiga is up, so you need not worry about giving him the slip," said Captain Over, who thought that Lydia would be well out of the young Spaniard's way. "If Miss Shore will join me in the morning we can do the shopping for the family. She speaks Spanish and I have done this sort of thing before."

Mr. Moulton, who looked upon Over as his personal conquest, and despite his good looks, never thought of him in the light of a marrying man, gave his message to Catalina, and pattered down the hall to break the news to his family. He was nervous but determined. Mrs. Moulton had seen all of Barcelona that was necessary for retrospect and conversation. Jane immediately began to pack her portmanteau. Lydia shot him a glance of reproach, flushed, and turned away.

"I won't have any decadent Spaniards philandering round my daughters," said Mr. Moulton firmly. "If

you were going to marry a Spaniard I had rather it were a peasant, for they, at least, are the hope of the country. This young Zuñiga hasn't an idea in his head beyond flirting and horse-racing. He has no education and no principles."

"I've talked with him more than you have," said Lydia with spirit, "and I think him lovely!"

"Lovely? What a term to apply to any man, let alone a dissipated Spaniard! Have I not begged you, my love, to choose your adjectives—one of the first principles of style?"

"I don't write," retorted Lydia, who was in a very naughty mood. "I have no use for style."

"I should never be surprised to see your name in our best magazines," said Mr. Moulton, with his infinite tact. "Make this young man the hero of a story, if you like. A clever Englishwoman I met yesterday, who has lived in Spain for many years, told me that the Spanish youth is the brightest in the world, but that when he reaches the age of fourteen his brain closes up like the shell of an oyster and never opens again; the reason is that at that age he takes to immoderate smoking and various other forms of dissipation; the brain from that time on receiving neither nourishment nor encouragement. I intend to write an essay on the subject. It is most interesting. And I thought out a splendid phrase this afternoon. I'll write it down this moment before I forget it." He whipped out his notebook. "'The only hope for Spain lies in the abolishment of bull-fights, beggars and priests.' First of all there must be a revolution in which the most worthless aristocracy in Europe will disappear forever. I would not have them beheaded, but driven out. Now, pack before you go to bed, my love, for we must be up bright and early—we have not seen the cathedral. Shall I help you?"

Jane had finished. Lydia sulkily declined his assistance. He kissed them both, and went off to his nightly

jottings and to pack the conjugal portmanteau.

Lydia continued to brush out her golden locks and to frown at her mirror. She longed for sympathy and a confidant, but knew that Jane would agree with her father, and recalled that Catalina had barely taken note of Zuñiga's existence.

"But if he has any sand," she informed herself, "he will follow me up. And I'll marry whom I please—so there!"

The next morning, having seen the rest of the party off to the cathedral, Catalina and Captain Over started down the Rambla Centro in high good humor; they shared the exhilaration of moving on and enjoyed the novelty of the new housekeeping. They packed a hamper with cold ham and roast chicken, cake and two loaves of bread. Then Catalina bought recklessly in a confectioner's and Captain Over visited a coffee-shop. When they had filled the front seat of their cab, Catalina, after a half-hour of sharp bargaining, bought a white lace mantilla and a fine old fan.

"These are two of the things I came to Spain for," she announced to the bewildered Englishman, who had shopped with women before, but never with a woman who was definite, concentrated, driving hard in a straight line. As they went out with the precious bundle he ventured his first remark.

"I had an idea you were indifferent to dress."

"I am and I am not. I had rather be comfortable most of the time, and I hate being stared at, but when I dress I dress. I may never wear this mantilla, but it is a thing of beauty to possess and look at."

"I hope you will wear it, and here in Spain. Are you part Spanish, by the way?"

"No, Indian."

"Indian?" He looked at her with renewed interest. "Do you mind?"

"No, I don't. It's a good excuse for a whole lot of things."

"Ah, I see. Well, it certainly makes you different from other people. You like that and you may believe it."

Lydia was profoundly thankful to leave Barcelona while her marquis still slumbered; she was too young and curious not to be glad to travel on any terms, but to say farewell in a third-class carriage to a member of an ancient aristocracy was quite another matter. She accounted for Captain Over's willingness to travel humbly by the supposition that he was in love with Catalina, and did not believe for a moment that it was his habit.

But Captain Over was not in love with Catalina. He was still half an invalid, and constitutionally indolent, as are most men who are immediately attractive to women. She interested and amused him, was a good comrade when in a good humor, and as full of pluck and resource as a boy. He liked all the family, including Jane, who was charmed with him, and enjoyed Mr. Moulton's many good stories. It was a pleasant party and he was glad to join it, but if he had been summoned hastily back to England, or been sure that when the journey was over he should never see these agreeable companions again, he would have accepted the decree with the philosophy of one who had met many delightful people in many country houses and sat by many delightful women at many London dinners, whose very names he might forget before he saw them again. It was a part of his charm that he appeared to live so wholly in the present, without retrospect or anticipation, and Catalina concluded it was the result of being a soldier, whose time was not his own, and who was ready and willing to accept the end of all things at any moment.

The cool open car in which they moved out of Barcelona had an aisle down the middle and was new and highly varnished. Even Jane condescended to remark that in hot weather in a dusty country such accommodations were preferable to up-

holstered seats which doubtless were not brushed once a month. Then she retired to her Pater, and the rest of the party hung out of the windows and gazed at the tremendous ridge of Montserrat cutting the blue sky like a thousand twisted fingers petrified in their death throes. It is the most jagged mass of rock in Europe; Nature would seem to have spat it out through gnashing teeth; and surely no spot more terrifying even to the gods could have been selected for the safe-keeping of the Holy Grail.

Then once more the train ambled through vineyards and silver olive groves, past old brown castles on their rocky heights, glimpses of Roman roads and ruins; the innumerable tunnels making the brown plains more dazzling, the sea in glimpses like a chain of peacocks' feathers.

Today for the greater part of the trip their companions were a large party of washing-women, brawny, with shining pleasant faces. They wore blue cotton frocks and white handkerchiefs pinned about their slippery heads. On the capacious lap of each was a basket of white clothes. They gossiped volubly and paid no attention to the Americans, who, indeed, in a short time, were so dusty that the varnish of civilization was obliterated.

They were a gay party. As the day's trip was to be short Mrs. Moulton concluded not to feel tired, and while they were in the tunnels Captain Over made her a cup of tea under the seat, regardless of the Guardia Civile who were honoring the carriage with their presence. These personages looked very sturdy and self-confident in their smart uniforms, and quite capable of handling the always possible bandit. Catalina audibly invoked him. She was possessed by that exhilaration which a woman feels when in the companionship of a new and interesting man with whom she is not in love. The great passion induces an illogical depression of spirits, melancholy forebodings, and extremes of sentimentalism, which are the death of high spirits and humor. Catalina had some

inkling of this, having experienced one or two brief and silent attacks of misplaced affection, and rejoiced in the spontaneous and mutual friendship. Outwardly she looked as solemn as usual, but perhaps even hidden sunshine may warm, for on no day since they left Lyons had the party been so independent of material ills. Even Lydia came forth from the sulky aloofness of the morning, and Jane laid Pater to rest, when, after the excellent luncheon, Catalina produced a large box of bonbons.

By this time there was no one in the car but the Guardia Civile and a young peasant, a brawny handsome Catalan, who might have been the village blacksmith, and a possible leader in the anarchy of his province. He had the haughty independent manner of his class, and although his eye was fiery and reckless, the lower part of his face symbolized power and self-control.

Lydia having carefully washed the dust from her face, in a spirit of mischief and breathless in her first open act of mutiny, left her seat abruptly and offered the box of sweets first to the military escort, who arose and declined with a profound bow, then to the young peasant. She had stood before the guards with downcast eyes, but when the peasant turned to her she deliberately lifted her long brown eyelashes, and the blue shallows sparkling with coquetry met a wild and eager flash never encountered before. A blue silk handkerchief was knotted loosely about her disheveled golden head, she wore a blue soft cotton blouse, and her cheeks were pink. Dainty and sweet and gracious, what wonder that she dazzled the rustic accustomed to maidens as swarthy as himself?

"*Madre de Dios!*" he muttered.

"*A dulce, señor?*" said Lydia, with the charming hesitation of the imperfect linguist.

Then the peasant rose and with the grace and courtesy of a grandee possessed himself of a bonbon. But he did not know, perhaps, that it was

intended to go the road of black bread and garlic, for he fumbled in the pocket of his blouse, brought forth an envelope, rolled up the sweetmeat, and tenderly secreted it. Lydia gave him a radiant smile, shook her head, and still held out the box.

"Eat one," she said; and as the man only stared at her with deepening color, she put one of the bonbons into her own mouth and motioned to him to follow suit. This time he obeyed her, and for the moment they had the appearance, and perhaps the sensation, of breaking bread together.

"*Dios de mi alma!*" muttered the man, and then Lydia bowed to him gravely, and turned slowly, reluctantly, and rejoined her panting family. Mrs. Moulton's face was scarlet; she was sitting upright; the air cushions were in a heap on the floor. Mr. Moulton's bland visage expressed solemn indignation, an expression which he had the ability to infuse into the review of a book prudence warned him to condemn.

"Lydia Moulton!" exclaimed her mother.

"I am grieved and ashamed," said her father.

"Why?" asked Lydia flippantly. "It is the custom in Spain to share with your traveling companions, and last night you said you had rather I married a Spanish peasant than a Spanish gentleman."

"I am ashamed of you!" repeated Mr. Moulton, with dignity. "Are you looking for a husband, may I ask? If so, we will go direct to Gibraltar and take the first steamer for America."

Lydia colored, but she was still in a naughty mood, and encouraged by a sympathetic flash from Catalina, she retorted:

"No, I don't want to marry, but I do want to be able to look at a man unchaperoned by the entire family. I haven't had the liberty of a convent girl since I arrived in Europe. I feel like running off with the first man that finds a chance to propose to me."

Mrs. Moulton, whose complexion

during this outburst had faded to its normal gray tones, the little lines of cultivated worries and invalidism quivering on the surface, turned her pale gaze upon Catalina. She stared mutely, but volumes rolled into the serene contemptuous orbs two seats away.

Mr. Moulton, in his way, was a rapid thinker. "My dear," he said gently to the revolutionist, "if we have surrounded you it has not been from distrust, but because you are far too pretty to be alone among foreigners for a moment. At home, as you know, you often receive your young friends alone. I am sure that when you think the matter over you will regret your lapse from dignity, particularly as you have no doubt disturbed that poor young man's peace of mind."

Lydia seldom rebelled, but she had learned that when her father became diplomatic she might as well smite upon stone; so she refrained from further sarcasm and retreating to a seat behind the others stared sullenly out of the window. She was not unashamed of herself, but longed nevertheless to meet again the fiery gaze of the Catalan—"the anarchist," she called him; it sounded far better than peasant. Zufiga dwindled out of her memory as the poor artificial thing he no doubt was. At last she had seen a blaze of admiration in the eyes of a real man. She was not wise enough to know that it was nothing in her meager little personality that had roused the lightnings in a manly bosom, merely a type of prettiness made unconventional by the setting and the man. But the impression was made, and had she dared she would have sent an occasional demure glance toward the young peasant behind her; as it was, she adjusted her charming profile for his delection.

They entered the long tunnel which the train traverses before skirting the bluffs of Tarragona. Spain does not light its railway carriages before dark. Lydia had thrown her arm along the seat. Suddenly she became aware that

someone, as lithe and noiseless as a cat, had entered the seat behind her. She was smitten with sudden terror, and held her breath. A second later a pair of young and ardent lips passed as lightly as a passing flame along her rigid hand.

"*Dueño adorado!*" The voice was almost at her ear. Then she knew that the seat was empty again. Her first impulse had been to cry out; she was terrified and furious. But she had a quick vision of a *mêlée* of knives and pistols, the *Guardia Civile* and peasant, reinforcements from the next car, and the death of all her party. It was the imaginative feat of her life, and as the train ran out of the tunnel she congratulated herself warmly and put on her hat as indifferently as Jane, who had never known the kiss of man. She swept past her admirer with her head high and her lids—with their curling lashes—low.

VII

"Ah!" exclaimed Captain Over, "this is Spain! Who is going to sit with me in front?"

Catalina made no reply, but she ran swiftly to the big canvas-covered diligence, climbed over the high wheel before Over could follow to assist her, and seated herself beside the driver with the most ingratiating manner that any of her party had seen her assume. Over placed himself beside her, the others took possession of the rear, the driver cracked his whip and the six mules, jingling with half a hundred bells, leapt down the dusty road toward the steep and rocky heights where Tarragona has defied the nations of the earth. Then it was that Over laughed softly and the innocent Moultons learned what depths of iniquity may lie at the base of a ranch girl's blandishments. As they reached the foot of the bluff the delighted youth who was answerable to heaven for his precious freight abandoned the reins. Catalina gathered them in one hand, half rose from her seat, and with a

great flourish cracked the long whip, not once, but thrice, delivering herself of sharp peremptory cries in Spanish. The mules needed no further encouragement. They tore up the steep and winding road, whisked round curves, strained every muscle to show what a Spanish mule could do. They even shook their heads and tossed them in the air that their bells might jingle the louder. Mrs. Moulton and Jane screamed, clinging to each other, the portmanteaus bounced to the floor, and Mr. Moulton would have grasped Catalina's arm, but Over intercepted and reassured him. And indeed there were few better whips than Catalina in a State notorious for a century of reckless and brilliant driving. She drove like a cowboy, not like an Englishwoman, Over commented, but he felt the exhilaration of it, even when the unwieldy diligence bounded from side to side in the narrow road, and the dust enveloped them. In a moment he shifted his eyes to her face. Her white teeth were gleaming through the half-open bow of her mouth, tense but smiling, and her splendid eyes were flashing not only with the pleasure of the born horsewoman, but with a wicked delight in the consternation behind her. She looked, despite the mules and the dusty old diligence, like a goddess in a chariot of victory, and Over, who rarely imagined, half expected to see fire whirling in the clouds of dust about the wheels.

As they reached the top of the bluff the driver indicated the way, and they flew down the *Rambla San Carlos*, past the astounded soldiers lounging in front of the barracks, and stopped with a grand flourish in front of the hotel.

Catalina turned to Over, her lips still parted, her eyes glittering.

"That is the first time I have been really happy since I left home," she announced, ignoring her precipitately descending relatives. "I feel young again, and I've felt as old as the hills ever since I've been in Europe. I'll like you forever because you approve of me, and I haven't seen that expression on anybody's face for months."

"Oh, I approve of you!" said the Englishman, laughing.

They descended, and she challenged him to race her to the parapet that they might limber themselves. He accepted, and in spite of her undepleted youth he managed to beat by means of a superior length of limb. The victory filled him with a quite unreasoning sense of exultation, and as they hung over the parapet and looked out upon the liquid turquoise of the sea, sparkling under a cloudless sky, its little white sailboats dancing along with the pure joy of motion, he felt younger and happier than he had since his cricket days.

"I think we had better not go to the hotel for a time," he suggested. "I am afraid that Mr. and Mrs. Moulton are in a bit of a wax. Perhaps after they have rested and freshened up they will forgive you, and meanwhile we can explore."

So they wandered off to the old town until they stood at the foot of a flight of ancient stone steps wider than three streets, that led up to the plaza before the cathedral. Crouching in the shallow corners of the stair were black-robed old crones who looked as if they might have begged of Cæsar. Passing up and down, or in and out of the narrow streets, to right and left were young women of languid and insolent carriage, in bright cotton frocks and yellow kerchiefs about their heads, young men in smallclothes and wide hats, loafing along as if all time were in their little day; and troops and swarms of children. These attached themselves to the strangers, encouraged by the caressing Spanish words of the girl, followed them through the cathedral, and out into a side street, chattering like magpies.

"You look like a comet with a long tail," said Over. "I'll scatter them with a few coppers—" He paused as she turned her head over her shoulder and regarded him with a wondering reproach. For the moment her large brown eyes looked bovine. "Do you want these little demons to follow us all over the place?" he asked curiously.

"Why not?"

"Tarragona is theirs," said Over lightly. "They would annoy most women." He hoped to provoke her to further revelation, but she made no reply, and they rambled with occasional speech through the ancient narrow streets, followed by their noisy retinue, the little Murillo faces sparkling with curiosity and foresight of illimitable wealth in coppers.

But even Catalina forgot them at times, as she and her companion stopped to decipher the Roman inscription on the foundation blocks of many of the houses. Although the houses themselves may have been younger than the huge blocks with their legends of the Scipios and the Cæsars, they were old enough, and the steep and winding streets, with the women hanging out of the high windows and sitting before the doors, all bits of color against the mellow stone, were no doubt much the same in effect as when Augustus and his hosts marched by with eagles aloft.

Catalina, who had the historic sense highly developed and had found her happiness in the past, infected Over with her enthusiasm, and he followed her without protest to the outskirts of the town, and looked down over the great valley beneath the heights of Tarragona, then up past the cyclopean walls, those stupendous unhewn blocks of masonry, which still, for a sweep of two miles or more, surround the old town.

"What a place to hide from the world!" said Catalina. They had turned into a little street just within the wall, and seated themselves on an odd block to rest, their exhausted retinue camping all the way along the line. Opposite them was a high and narrow house, its upper balcony full of flowers, and an arcade behind suggesting the dim quiet of a patio with its palms and fountain, its shadows haunted with incommunicable memories of an ancient past. "The new town we drove through with its fine houses is too commonplace; but this—any one of these eyries—what a nest!

I could live quite happy up there, couldn't you?"

"For a time." He was too frankly modern to yield unconditionally. "But I must confess I can't think what artists are about."

When they reached the plaza Catalina turned to the children and solemnly thanked them for the great pleasure and service they had rendered two belated strangers. They accepted the tribute in perfect good faith and then scrambled for the coppers.

VIII

OVER and Catalina walked hastily to the hotel; they had but half an hour in which to make themselves presentable for dinner. Preparation for this function, however, was not elaborate. A tub and a change of shirt and blouse were all that could be expected of weary tourists traveling with one portmanteau each; their trunks were not to leave the stations until they reached Granada. Catalina invariably appeared in her hat, ready to go out again the moment the meal was over if she could induce Mr. Moulton to take her. Tonight the others sat down to their excellent repast in the cool dining-room without her. Mrs. Moulton and Jane were disposed to treat Over with hauteur, but thawed after the soup and fish. Mr. Moulton had long since recovered his serenity and expressed regret that he had not accompanied the more enterprising members of the party. Only Lydia, who had put on her prettiest blouse and fluffed her hair anew, was interested in neither dinner nor Tarragona.

"Off your feed?" Over was asking sympathetically, when Mrs. Moulton, who was helping herself to the roast, dropped the fork on her plate. The others followed the direction of her astonished eyes and beheld Catalina—but not the Catalina of their habit. Hers was the largest of the portmanteaus, and it was evident that she had excavated it at last. Gone were the stiff short skirt and ill-

fitting blouse, the drooping hat and shapeless coat. She wore a girlish gown of white nun's veiling, made with a masterly simplicity that revealed her figure in all its long grace, its gentle curves and supple power of endurance. Only the round throat and forearms were revealed, but the lace about them and the calm stateliness of her carriage produced the impression of full dress. Her mass of waving chestnut hair, with a sheen of gold-like a web on its surface, was parted and brushed back from her oval face into a heavy knot at the base of the head. Around her throat she wore a string of pearls, and falling from her shoulders a crimson scarf.

She walked down the long room with a perfect simulation of unconsciousness, except for the lofty carriage of her head, which concealed much inward trepidation. Her broad brow was as bland as a child's, and her eyes wore what an admirer had once called her "wondering look." Never had her remarkable mouth looked so like a bow, the bow of her Indian ancestors. A beauty she was at last, fulfilling the uneasy prediction of her relatives. The few other people in the dining-room stared, the waiters stared, the Moultons stared, and Captain Over, who had risen, stared at her hard.

"Ripping! Ripping!" he thought. Then with a shock of personal pride, "She no longer looks like a cowboy. She might be on her way to court."

It was characteristic of Catalina that she did not even sink into her seat with one of those airy remarks with which woman demonstrates her ease in unusual circumstances. She made no remark whatever, but helped herself to the roast and fell to with a hearty appetite. Neither did she send a flash of coquetry to Captain Over; and he with an odd sense that in her incongruity, and the hostility aroused in two of the party, she stood in need of a protector, began talking much faster than was his wont, and even condescended to tell Mr. Moulton an anecdote of the late campaign.

Having gone so far he hardly could retreat, and indeed his reluctance seemed finally to be overcome. Very soon the company had forgotten Catalina, and Catalina came forth from herself and hung upon his words. Given her own way she would have been a man and a soldier, and like all normal women she exalted heroism to the head of the manly virtues. Over told no stories wherein he was the hero, but unwittingly he unrolled a panorama of infinite possibilities for the brave race of whose best he was a type. At all events, he made himself extremely interesting, and when he was finally left to Mr. Moulton and cigars, Catalina walked blindly out of the front door of the hotel, reinvoking the pictures that had stimulated her imagination. She was recalled by the pressure of a small but bony hand on her bare arm. She turned to meet the cold blue gaze of Mrs. Moulton. That gentlewoman was very erect and very formal.

"You cannot go out alone!" she said, with disgust in her voice. "I am surprised to be forced to remind you that this is not—California. It would be impossible in your traveling costume, but dressed as for an evening's entertainment in a private house you would be insulted at once. As long as you travel with us I must insist that you give as little trouble as possible."

If she hoped for war, feeling herself for once secure, she was disappointed. Catalina merely shrugged her shoulders and re-entering the hall, ascended the stair. She recalled that her room opened upon a balcony, which would answer her purpose.

The balcony hung above a garden, overflowing with flowers, surrounded on three sides by the hotel and its low outbuildings, and secluded from the sloping street by a high wall. She paced up and down watching the servants under the veranda washing their dishes. They all wore a bit of the bright color beloved of the Iberian, and they made a great deal of noise. Suddenly Lydia took pos-

session of her arm and related the adventure of the afternoon.

"Is it not dreadful?" she concluded. "A peasant! But to save my life I cannot be as furious as I should—nor help thinking of it. I feel like one of those princesses in the fairy tales beloved of the poor but wonderful youth."

"It is highly romantic," replied Catalina drily. "The setting was not all that it might have been, and I have seen too many picturesque vaqueros all my life to be deeply impressed by a handsome peasant in a blouse; but I suppose any romance is better than none in this old world."

She felt vaguely alarmed, and half a generation older than this silly little cousin whose suburban experience made her peculiarly susceptible to any semblance of romance in Europe; but as Lydia, repelled in her girlish confidence, drew stiffly away from her, Catalina relented with a gush of feminine sympathy.

"I really mean that a bit of romance like that makes life more endurable," she asserted. "And you may be sure that your marquis would not have been so delicate. I wonder who he is! He certainly is a personage in his way. Of course, you'll never see him again, but it will be something to think about when you are married to an author and correcting his typewritten manuscripts!"

Lydia, mollified, laughed merrily. "I'm never going to marry any old author. Let the recording angel take note of that. I'm sick of mutual admiration societies—and all the rest of it. If I can't do any better I'll manage to marry some enterprising young business man and help him to grow rich."

Catalina, who had had her own way all her life, nevertheless appreciated the colorless shallows in which her cousin had splashed of late in the vain attempt to reach a shore, and replied sympathetically:

"Come back to California when I go, and live on my ranch for a while. Out of doors is what you want; a far-away horizon is as good for the soul as for

the eyes. And you'll get enough of the picturesque and all the liberty you can carry——"

She paused abruptly and Lydia caught her breath. In the street below was the sound of a guitar, then of a man's impassioned voice.

The girls stole to the edge of the balcony and looked over. There was no moon, and the vines were close. The street was thick with shadows, but they could see the lithe active figure of a man clad in velvet jacket and small-clothes. His head was flung back and his quick rich notes seemed to leap to the balcony above. Catalina had forgotten that her candles still burned. Their rays fell directly on the girls. The man saw them and his voice burst forth in such peremptory volume, ringing against the walls of the narrow street, that heads began to appear at many windows.

"It is that peasant we saw on the train today," said Over's amused voice behind the girls. "He was in the café a moment ago and is got up in full peasant finery. You made a conquest, Miss Lydia."

Catalina felt her companion give an ecstatic shiver, but omitted to pull her back as she leaned recklessly over the rail. Her own spirit seemed to swirl in that glorious tide. She threw back her head, staring at the black velvet skies of Spain with their golden music, then turned slowly and regarded the old white walls and gardens about her, the palms and the riot of flowers and vine, invoking the image of Caesar himself prowling in the night to the lattice of inviting loveliness in a mantilla. She wished she had draped her own about her head, and wondered if Over shared her vision.

But he was merely marveling at her beauty, and wondering if he should ever get as far as California. He would like to see her in that patio she had described to him, with its old Mission fountain, its gigantic date palms through whose bending branches the sun never penetrated, the big-leaved banana tree heavy with yellow fruit, the scarlet hammock, the mountains

rising just behind the old house. She had described it to him only that afternoon, and he had received a vivid impression of it all, and of the deep verandas and the cool austere rooms within. It had struck him as a delightful retreat after the strife of the world, and he wondered if under that eternally blue sky, in that southern land of warmth and color, where the very air caressed, he could not forget even the broad demesne of his ancestors, a demesne that would never be his, but where he was always a welcome guest. She had told him that her estate—her "ranch"—went right down to the sea; it was, in fact, a wide valley, closed with the Pacific at one end, and a range of mountains immediately behind the house. It had seemed to him the ideal existence as she described it, a perfect balance of the intellectual and the outdoor life, of boundless freedom and unvarying health; and all in an atmosphere of perfect peace. He had envied her at the moment, but had philosophically concluded that in the long run a man's club most nearly filled the bill. He fancied, however, that he should correspond with her, and one of these days pay her a visit.

"Best remember that this is the land of passion, not of idle flirtation, Miss Lydia," he said warningly, as the music ceased for a moment. "What is play to you might be death to that Johnny down there."

For answer Lydia plucked a rose and dropped it into a lithe brown hand that shot up to meet it.

IX

CATALINA threw on her dressing-gown and leaned far out of her window. The very air felt as if it had been drenched by the golden shower of the morning sun, and so clear it was it glittered like the sea. Across the narrow way was a stately white house, doubtless the "palace" of a rich man, and behind it, high above the street, was a beautiful garden, at whose very end, in an angle of the stone wall,

stood a palm tree. Beyond that palm tree, so delicate and graceful in its peculiar stiffness, was a glimpse of blue water. Far below was a cross street in which no one moved as yet, and beside her were the balcony and garden of the hotel, and the vines hanging over the wall.

Catalina sang, in the pure joy of being alive, a snatch of one of the Spanish songs still to be heard in Southern California.

"*Buenas dias, señorita,*" broke in a low and cautious voice, and Catalina, turning with a start and frown, saw that Captain Over was looking round the corner of the balcony.

"If you will come out here," he continued, "I will make you a cup of coffee, and then we can go for a walk."

Catalina nodded amiably, and hastily dressing herself, opened her long window and joined him. He had brought his traveling lamp and coffee-pot, and the water was simmering. With the exception of a man who was cleaning harness in the court below they seemed to be the only persons awake. The air was heavy laden with sweet scents, and the garden in the fresh morning light was a riot of color. The Mediterranean was murmuring seductively to the shore.

"This is heaven," sighed Catalina. "Why can't one always be free from care like this?—the Moultons, to be exact. Let's you and I and Lydia run away from the rest."

"When I run away with a woman I shall not take a chaperon," said Over coolly.

Catalina could assume the blankness of a mask, but upon repartee she never ventured. "Am I not to do any of the work?" she asked. "I am sick of being waited on. At home I often make my own breakfast before my lazy Mexicans are up, and saddle my horse. I do a great deal of work on the ranch, first and last, for I believe in work—and I didn't get the idea from Tolstoi, either. I don't like Tolstoi," she added defiantly. "He's one of those gigantic fakes the world always believes in."

"Well, I've never read a line of Tolstoi," admitted Captain Over, who was carefully revolving his coffee machine, "so I can't argue with you. But work! This is all the work I want."

"Don't you love work?"

"I don't."

"But you do work."

"At what?"

"Oh, in the army and all that."

"My orderly does the work."

"You are so provoking. There is all sorts of work you must do yourself."

"Well, why do you remind me of anything so painful, when I am doing my best to forget it? You are not an altruist or a socialist, are you?"

"I'm not anything that someone else has invented. I believe in work because idleness horrifies me; some primal instinct in me wars against it. The civilization that permits idleness in the rich and in those with just enough to relieve them from work, with none of the responsibilities and diversions of great fortunes, is no civilization at all, to my mind. Of course, I believe in progress, but I believe in hanging on to the conditions which first made progress possible; and when I saw those carriage loads of ridiculous women and finery in Paris I wanted to go home and till the soil and restore the balance. How good that coffee smells!"

He poured her out a steaming cup. He had raided the kitchen for cream and bread and he carried sugar with him. No orderly had ever made better coffee.

"What women?" he asked, smiling into her still angry eyes. They were seated at a little table close to the railing and the vines hung down in her hair. Her theories might be crude and somewhat vague, but at least she thought for herself.

She described the morning in the rue de Rivoli and the procession of American butterflies.

"What can you expect in a new republic of sudden fortunes?" he asked.

"Someone must spend the money, and the men haven't time."

"Then are your women something besides nerves and clothes—your leisure women?"

"I don't wish to be rude, but they are. I am, of course, only comparing them with your idle class. I have had no chance to meet any other until now. But I have met scores of rich American women and girls in London and at country houses, and I've come to the conclusion that what is the matter with them—aside from lack of traditions—is that their men leave them nothing to do but spend money and amuse themselves. With us rich women and poor are helpmeets, and what saves our fast set from being as empty-headed as yours is that they have grown up among men of affairs, have heard the great questions discussed all their lives. Then, of course, they are far better educated, and often extremely clever—something more than bright and amusing. Many of them are pretty hard cases, I'm not denying that; but few are silly. They have not had the chance to be, and that is where ancestors come in, too—serious ancestors. Personally, I have never been sensible to the famous charm of the American woman, and although there are exceptions, naturally—I am only generalizing—they strike me in the mass as being shallow, selfish, egotistical, nervous. I suppose the fundamental trouble is that they have so much that an impossible ideal of happiness is the result, and they are restless and dissatisfied because they can't get it. Possibly in another generation or two they may develop the sort of brain that makes the women of the old world well balanced and philosophical."

"Weren't you ever tempted to marry an heiress?"

"I never saw one that would look at me, so I've been spared one temptation, at least."

Catalina had finished her coffee. She leaned her chin on her hands and gazed at him reflectively. "I should think you could get one," she said

quite impersonally. "If you weren't such a practical soul you'd be almost romantic-looking, and you're quite the ideal soldier, besides being a guardsman and well-born. I think if you came to Santa Barbara I could find you a rich girl. Quantities come there for the winter, and they are always delighted to be asked to a ranch."

"All women are matchmakers," he said testily. "A poor fellow I left out in South Africa got off just one epigram in his life. 'There are two kinds of women, living women and dead women.' I believe he was right. Shall we go and see if they will let us into the archbishop's palace?"

X

"Quien quiere agua? Quien quiere agua?"

The shrill cries of the water-carriers smote upon grateful ears as the dusty sun-baked train paused at Fuente, a little station on the zigzag between Valencia and Albacete. They were young misshapen girls, the hip that supported the gourd at least three inches higher than the other, with a corresponding elevation of shoulder. All along the train, hands were waving encouragingly, accompanied by cries of "*Aquí! Aquí!*" and the glasses were rapidly filled and emptied. But few ran over to the cantina where the wine of the country was sold; and the amount of water that is dispensed at every station in Spain should encourage those whose war-cry is Temperance and who are prone to believe that the Southern races are lost. But water is precious in Spain, and must be paid for. At every station old women are waiting with buckets to catch the discharge from the engine; not, it is to be hoped, for traffic.

Even the Moultons, who had exhausted Captain Over's aluminum bottle and had prejudices against uncertified water, passed out their own cups and drank thirstily. No one was in his best temper. Valencia is a

dirty, noisy, ill-mannered city, and after two sleepless nights they had been forced to rise early or remain another day. Moreover, the handsome peasant had followed them with a melodious persistence that was causing Mr. Moulton serious uneasiness. It was impossible to appeal to the Guardia Civile, for the man did nothing that was not within his rights; for the matter of that the stranger in Spain is practically without rights. The man—his name, it was now known, was Jesus Maria—a name common enough in a land without humor—never even offered them the usual courtesies of travel. Nevertheless, he managed to make his presence felt in a hundred ways independently of his voice and guitar, as well as the subtle intimation that for the stern frown on Mr. Moulton's brow he cared nothing.

"I don't wish any trouble, of course," Mr. Moulton had said to Over that morning, "but I am seriously considering the plan of continuing the journey to Granada in a first-class carriage. Lydia has already begun to suffer from the annoyance, and it is abominable that a refined, carefully brought up girl should be subjected to such an experience. The marquis was bad enough—but this! Even when her back is to him I am sure she feels his rude stare. I can assure you, Over, a pretty daughter is a great responsibility; but although I have had to dispose—diplomatically, of course—of several undesirable suitors, I never even anticipated anything like this. It is preposterous."

"The first-class idea is not bad; it would emphasize the difference between them; it is rather a puzzle to him, I fancy—he is a Spaniard, remember—that we travel in his own way and yet regard him from a superior plane."

Captain Over, as he stood with Catalina at a booth on the platform buying substantial tortillas made of eggs, meat and potatoes, repeated the conversation. "He thinks they have never communicated in any way," he

added. "What is the best thing to do? I don't fancy telling tales, but it seems to me Mr. Moulton should be warned."

"Oh, Lydia can take care of herself," said Catalina carelessly. "She is a little flirt and quite intoxicated with what she calls an intrigue. It is the first time she has ever done any thinking for herself—you can see what Cousin Lyman is; he'd feed us if we'd let him. If we were Moultons, we'd be taking a little fling ourselves. Here she comes."

Lydia found a place beside them in the crowd that was clamoring for the old woman's hot tortillas.

"Mother says there is not enough bread," she said. "Jane is afraid of the beggars and father has disappeared, or I suppose I should not have got this far alone. Talk about the freedom of the American girl! I'd like to write a book to tell the world how many different kinds of Americans there are."

"You can't deny that you are a spoiled child, though," said Over banteringly, and then he scowled. The young peasant had joined the group and was quietly demanding a tortilla. He no longer wore his peasant blouse, but the gala costume he had bought or borrowed in Tarragona. He was a superb figure of a man, and every woman on the platform stared at him. He looked haughtily aloof, even from Lydia, but Over saw her hand seek her little waist-bag, and suspected that a note passed.

"He certainly is a man," he said to Catalina, as they walked back to the train; "looks more of a gentleman, for that matter, than a good many we dine with. Still, it can't go on; so set your wits to work, and we'll get rid of him between us."

But for Jesus Maria the afternoon would have been delightful. They were ascending, and the air was cooler; the great plain of La Mancha was studded with windmills, and its horizon gave up the welcome and lofty ridges of the Sierra de Alcatraz. But the cavalier—when not smoking the eternal cigarito—strummed his guitar and sang all the love-songs he knew. Mr.

Moulton coughed and frowned and ordered Lydia to turn her back; but open remonstrance might have meant the flashing of knives, certainly the vociferating protest of female voices, for the car was crowded and the peasants were delighted with the concert. At Chin-chilla, however, there was a diversion and love moved rearward.

A man leaped into the train. He wore a belt of three tiers, and each tier was stuck full of knives. Mrs. Moulton screamed; but he was immediately surrounded by the peasants, who snatched at the knives and bargained shamelessly. In a moment he thrust them aside, and, making his way to the strangers, protested that he had reserved his best for them, and flourished in their faces some of the finest specimens of Albacete, long curved blades of steel and long curved handles of ebony or ivory inlaid with bits of colored glass and copper. Catalina and Captain Over bought several at a third of the price demanded. The Catalan had followed the huckster, and under Mr. Moulton's very nose he bought the longest and most deadly of the collection. After several playful thrusts at the vender, and severing a lock of his hair, he thrust it conspicuously into his sash and with a lightning glance at poor Mr. Moulton returned to his seat. Here it was evident that he related deeds of prowess; once more he flourished the knife, and his audience uttered high staccato notes of approval.

XI

THEY arrived at Albacete before nightfall. It was too small a place for the omnibus, but several enterprising boys appropriated the hand luggage and, without awaiting instructions, made for the one hotel of the Alto. This proved to be so far superior to the hotel of the small American town that it appeared palatial to the weary travelers. It stood, large and white and cool, on the Alameda, whose double row of plane trees formed an avenue down the middle of the long wide street. It is true the beds were not

made, water appeared to be as precious as at the stations, and the servant as weak of head as of ambulatory muscle, but the rooms were large and lofty and clean and the supper was eatable. Mrs. Moulton and Jane, after a brief ramble, sought what to both was become the end and aim of all traveling—bed and quiet; and Mr. Moulton, leaving the other two girls in charge of Over, soon followed their example.

"I saw that scoundrel leave the train," he murmured as he left Over at the foot of the staircase, "but he has gone off to the diversions of the new town, no doubt, and will be occupied for a few hours at least."

The girls had wandered to the doorway and were looking out into the dark Alameda. Over exchanged a glance with Catalina and drew Lydia's hand through his arm.

"Miss Shore is tired," he said, "but I am sure you will enjoy another stroll. At all events, don't leave me to moon by myself." And Lydia, flattered by the unusual attention, surrendered with her charming animation of word and feature.

They walked beside the Alameda down to the quaint old plaza, surrounded by white houses of varied architecture, deserted and dimly lit with the infrequent lamp. When Englishmen are diplomatic they are the most subtle and sinuous of mankind, but when they are not they are the bluntest. Over said nothing whatever until he had enjoyed the half of his pipe and then he remarked: "I say, you must drop that man—send him about his business without any more loss of time."

Lydia, who had been prattling amiably, stiffened and attempted to withdraw her arm.

"What are my affairs to you?" she asked haughtily.

"For this trip I am your big brother. I should not merit the friendship of your father if I did not make this affair my own. Brothers are always privileged to be rude, you know: you are not only playing a silly game, but a

dangerous one. That man will try to kidnap you—he is only one degree removed from a bandit." Lydia's eyes flashed, and he hastened to rectify a possible misstep. "How would you like to live in the side of a hill with your lord—to escape taxes—and cook his frioles three hundred and sixty-five days of the year? If he didn't beat you, he certainly would not serenade you, and even in a country where water is more plentiful than in Spain—suppose you induced him to emigrate—it is doubtful if he would ever take a bath—"

"You are a brute!"

"Merely practical. He would insist upon having his beans flavored with garlic, and he doubtless smokes all night as well as all day. He may be a good enough sort in the main, but there is no hope here for a man to rise above his station in life. If there were a revolution he would probably be in the thick of it and get himself killed; and if he followed you to America—failing to kidnap you—he would doubtless open a cigar-shop on the Bowery."

He had expected tears, but Lydia drew herself up, and said coldly: "I don't think I am in danger of being kidnapped. Strange as it may appear, I feel quite well able to take care of myself, and if with you on one side and father on the other I can't vary the monotony of life with a little flirtation—well, if you were a girl, surrounded by goody-goody people as I have always been, you might be tempted a little way by something that had the glamour of romance."

"Girls must find life rather a bore," said Over sympathetically. "And I only wish your hero were worthy of you; but take my word for it, his romantic picturesqueness is only skin—clothes deep. No man is romantic, if it comes to that. I met a long-haired poet once, and when we got him in the smoking-room he was the prosiest of the lot."

"There is no such thing as romance, then?" asked Lydia, with a sigh.

"Not when you are 'up against it,' to use a bit of your own slang."

As the radiating streets were dark they paced slowly about the plaza. For a time Lydia was silent, and Over drew thoughtfully at his pipe. Finally he asked curiously:

"Do you women really get any satisfaction out of that sort of thing—talking with your eyes and exchanging an occasional note? I mean, of course, unless you have a definite idea that it is going to lead to something?"

"We like any little excitement," said Lydia drily, "and the littlest is better than none. I suppose you are too masculine—too British—to understand that!"

"Well, yes, I am, rather. I fancy what is the matter with girls is that they don't have to work as hard as boys—don't have so many opportunities to work off steam. As for this Johnny, he must be a silly ass if he is content with singing and sighing and rigging himself out. If he isn't—there lies the danger. He'll rally his friends and carry you off. Nothing could be simpler."

"I should be quite like Helen—or Mary, Queen of Scots!"

"Good Lord!"

She flushed under the lash of his voice, but in a moment raised her eyes softly to his. "You are so good," she murmured. "Really like a brother, so I don't mind telling you that I am fearfully interested—but not so much in the mere man as in the whole thing. It has all *seemed* so romantic, at least. I don't believe an American girl ever had such an experience before. However, I will set your mind at rest—since you are so good as to take an interest in poor little me—I haven't the slightest desire really to know the man. I should be disenchanted, of course, for I could not stand commonness in the most beautiful husk. But—there is something in one quite independent of all that—of one's upbringing, one's prejudices, of common sense—can't you understand?—the primeval attraction of man and woman. I have been quite aware that all this could come to nothing, but it has been something to

have felt that way for once in a well-regulated lifetime; to have been primal for a fleeting moment is something, I can assure you."

Over groped in the depths of his masculine understanding. "Well, I suppose so. But what of the man? It is a mere experience to you, but it may be a matter of life and death to a poor devil who is nine-tenths fire and sentiment."

"He, too, has something to think about for the rest of his life."

"And you fancy that will satisfy him?"

"It will have to."

"You might have spared him."

"There can be no romance without a hero."

"Upon my word, you are the greater savage of the two!"

"I told you I enjoyed being a savage for once in my life."

Over made no reply, and if Lydia's glance had not dropped to the uneven pavement, she would have seen his eyes open wide with incredulous amazement and then flash with anger. As it was, she wondered why he hurried her back to the hotel, and then practically ordered her up to her room. He stood on the lower step of the stair until he heard her greet Jane; then he left the hotel and walked rapidly down the street again. In a moment he met Catalina.

"Oh," he said, with an awkward attempt at masculine indifference, although his eyes were blazing. "Are you out—alone—as late as this? Isn't it rather risky?"

"I've been walking with Jesus Maria," she replied coolly. "What a baby you were to walk off through these lonely streets with Lydia. I supposed, of course, that you would talk to her in the hotel. Don't you know that man would have been mad with jealousy if he had seen you? Then there would have been a fine rough-and-tumble if he hadn't got a knife into your back first. He came along with that everlasting guitar under his arm just after you left, and I told him that Lydia was ill, and

asked him to take a walk with me. We'd better give him the slip as soon as possible; he's off his head about her."

"What a little brick you are! What did he have to say?"

"I explained to him that he could never hope to marry Lydia, and elevated the family to the ancient aristocracy of America. It made no impression on him whatever. He expressed contempt for the entire race, barring Lydia, whom he takes to be an angel. I concluded that disloyalty was the better part, and told him that Lydia was nothing but a little American flirt trying to have a sensation. That made even less impression on him—he believes that she is ready to fly with him at a moment's notice. I did more harm than good, and I shall speak to Cousin Lyman tonight."

Over stared hard at her. "That was very brave of you. Aren't you afraid of anything?"

"Not of greasers!" replied the Californian. "I've dealt with them all my life. I treated this one as an equal, and made him forget Lydia in talking about himself. He's a revolutionist, hates the queen because she doesn't go to bull-fights, despises the king, anathematizes all monarchies and aristocracies, and talks like a Fourth of July oration about the days when Spain will be a republic, and one of his own sort—possibly himself—will president. I never heard so much brag in America. But he's full of pluck. Now, you go and call Cousin Lyman out into the hall, and we'll have a consultation."

XII

THE upshot of the conference was the decision that on the following morning the Moultons should conspicuously enter a third-class carriage of the train bound for Baeza, and while Captain Over, on the platform, talked with Catalina in the doorway, they should slip out of the opposite entrance, cross the track and take the train for Alcazar. The Alcazar train,

the landlord assured them, left two minutes earlier than that for Baeza, so that Catalina, in the confusion of the last moments, could join her relatives unobserved. It was the habit of Jesus Maria to saunter down late, and even then to engage in conversation on the platform. Catalina had told him they intended to spend the following night at Baeza, and he was under the impression they were bound for Seville. Captain Over would take Catalina's place in the doorway, covering her retreat, and await the rest of his party in Baeza.

It was a program little to the taste of any of them, but Over heroically proposed it, and it seemed to be the only feasible plan.

In Spain there is apparently no law against crossing the tracks, nor in leaving a train on the wrong side. On the following morning Catalina, having reserved a first-class compartment on the train for Alcazar, the six members of the party, portmanteaus in hand, filed down to the station and entered a third-class carriage on the Southern train. In a few moments Over descended leisurely and lit a cigarette. Catalina leaned forward to chat with him, then stood up, her bright amused glances roving over the country people who were bound for a fair in a town nearby. The peasants were interested in themselves and contemptuously indifferent to strangers. The Moultons, including the mystified and angry Lydia, descended and crossed the track unobserved. Catalina, one hand on her portmanteau, was ready to make a dash the moment she heard the familiar drone, "*Viajeros al tren.*" It might be expected within the next five minutes, and it might be belated for twenty.

"There he comes!" she murmured. "If he should take it into his head to enter the train before it starts! We will tell him the others are late. What a pity you don't speak Spanish; you could engage him in conversation. He is looking—glowering at me! Do you suppose he suspects?"

"It is not like you to lose your

nerve," began Over, but at the same moment his glance moved from the Catalan's face to hers, and he smiled. She looked, if anything, more impassive than usual. "My knees are shaking," she confided to him, "and my heart is galloping. It is rather delightful to be so excited, but still—thank heaven!" Jesus Maria had met an acquaintance. They lit the friendly cigarito and entered into conversation.

"They are walking down the platform," said Catalina anxiously a moment later, "and the other train is not so far back as this; however, Cousin Lyman will no doubt keep the door shut. There, he's turning. I'd better make a bolt. Good-bye. *Au revoir*—"

"Tell me again exactly what I am to do. I don't want to run any risk of missing you."

Catalina glanced over her shoulder. There was such a babble, both in the car and on the platform, that it would not be difficult to miss the sing-song of the guard. The other train was still there.

"Do not go to the town. It is miles from the station; there is sure to be an inn close by. If we don't arrive tomorrow night, of course, you will have a telegram; in any case, don't wait for us, but go on to Granada. You can amuse yourself there, and we are sure to turn up sooner or later. Have you that list of Spanish words I wrote out?"

He looked forlorn and homesick, and Catalina laughed outright. "Better go straight to Granada," she said.

"*Viajeros al tren!*"

"Take my place—quick!" whispered Catalina. She let herself down on the other side, dragged her heavy bag after her, and ran. She had a confused idea that the Northern train was closer than it had been, but did not pause until she came to the first-class carriages. Then she saw that the train was empty. At the same instant she heard a whistle, and glancing distractedly up the track saw a train gliding far ahead.

There was not a moment to be lost. It was the guard of the Southern train that had sounded his warning cry, and

she ran back, dragging the heavy portmanteau—it held the day's lunch, among other things—and almost in tears. It had been an exciting morning, and she had slept little the night before.

She stopped and gasped. The train was moving—slowly, it is true, but far too rapidly for a person on the wrong side with a heavy piece of luggage. She dropped the portmanteau and drawing a long breath, called with all the might of lungs long accustomed to the ranch cry:

"Captain Over! Captain Over!"

The door of a carriage was opened instantly. Over took in the situation at a glance, leaped to the ground and ran toward her, caught up the portmanteau and, regaining his compartment flung it within. Catalina followed it with the agility of a cat, and in another moment they were panting opposite each other.

Catalina fanned herself with her hat; she would not speak until she could command her voice.

"How was anyone to know they would run another train between?" she said finally. "Poor Cousin Lyman! He must be frantic. Cousin Miranda, no doubt, is delighted. It is my fault, of course—no, it is yours; you should not have engaged me in conversation at the critical moment."

"I will take the blame—and the best of care of you, besides."

She was looking out of the window at the moment, and he glanced at her curiously. She was quite unembarrassed, and what he had dimly felt before came to him with the force of a shock. With all her intellect, and her interest in many of the vital problems of life, she was as innocent as a child. She might not be ignorant, but she had none of the commonplace inquisitiveness and morbidness of youth, and he recalled that she had grown up without the companionship of other girls, had read few novels, and little subjective literature of any sort. She had never looked younger, more utterly guileless than as she sat fanning herself slowly, her hair damp and tumbled, the flush

of excitement in her cheek. Over felt as if he had a child in his charge, and drew a long breath of relief. He knew many girls who would have carried off the situation, but their very dignity would have been the signal of inner tribulation, and made him miserable; with Catalina he had but to have a care that she was not placed in a false position; and, after all, the time was short, and they were unlikely to meet anyone who even spoke the English language.

She met his eyes and they burst into laughter like two contented and naughty children.

"I'm so happy to get rid of them I can't contain myself," announced Catalina. "So are you, only you are too polite to say so. I could have done it on purpose, but am rather glad I failed through too much zeal. Do you understand Lydia?" she asked abruptly.

"I don't waste time trying to understand women," he replied cautiously.

"I thought perhaps she confided in you last night. She has tried to unbosom herself to me, but I have not been sympathetic. I don't understand her. I am half a savage, I suppose, but I could go through life and never even see a man like that."

"I can't make out if she loves him."

"Oh, love!" Catalina elevated her nose the higher, as the word gave her a vague thrill. "You can't be in love with a person you can't talk to—outside of poetry. Would you call that sort of thing love?"

"No. I don't think I should."

"I fancy it is a mere arbitrary effort to feel romantic." She stood up suddenly and looked over the crowded car, then turned to Over with wide eyes.

"He is not here!" she said.

"Doubtless he is in the next car, or he may have jumped off when he discovered the exodus."

He searched the other cars when the train stopped again, and returned to report that Jesus Maria was missing. Catalina shrugged her shoulders. "We

did our best," she said, "and I, for one, am not going to bother. We'll have them again soon enough."

The great sun-burned dusty plains were behind them today, and the train toiled upward through tremendous gorges, brown, barren, the projecting ledges looking as if they had but just been rent asunder, so little had time done to soften them. In the defiles were villages, or solitary houses, poor for the most part; now and again a turn of the road closed the perspective with a line of snow peaks. The air was clear and cool; there was little dust. Their car gradually gave up its load, until by lunch-time only one man was left, and he gratefully accepted of their superfluous store. He looked, this old Iberian, like the aged men who sit in the cabin doors in Ireland; the same long self-satisfied upper lip, the small cunning eyes, the narrow head of the priest-ridden race. He had done nothing, learned nothing, in his three score and ten, braced himself passively against the modern innovation, and could be cruel when his chance came to him. He cared no more for what the priests could not tell him than he cared that Spain could not make the wretched engines drawing her trains. On the whole, no doubt, he was happy. At all events, he was extremely well-bred, and took no liberty that he would not have resented in another.

But Catalina forgot him in the grand and forbidding scene, and she leaned out of the window so recklessly that more than once Over, as if she were a child, put his hand on her shoulder and drew her in. He began dimly to understand that Catalina had something more than the mere love of nature and appreciation of the beautiful common enough in the higher civilization. She tried, but not very successfully, to express to him that the vague desire to personify great mountains, the trees, and the sea, which haunts imaginative minds, the deathless echo of prehistoric ancestors, whose only revenge it is upon time, was doubly insistent in one so recently allied to the

tribe of Chinigchinich, whose roots were in Asia.

Of immemorial descent, with the record in her brain, perhaps, of those ancestors who personified and worshiped the phenomena of nature before the evolution of that first priesthood on the Ganges and the Euphrates, the Nile and the Indus, she had rare moments of primal exaltation. It is a far cry from those marvelous first societies and the vast orderly and complicated civilization, worshiping mysterious and unseen gods, that followed them, to the Chinigchinich Indians of Alta California; and yet, crushed, conquered, almost blotted out, these remnants, in their very despair, reverted the more closely to nature. The beautiful Carmela was the child of Mission Indians who fled back to their mountain pueblos and savage rites when the power of the priests in California was broken. Every inherited instinct had waged war against the Christianity which, in nine cases out of ten, was pounded into them with a green hide reata. They called the child Carmela, after the Mission of Carmel, merely because they liked the name; but she grew up a pagan, and a pagan remained during the few years of her life. And she was as pure and good, as loyal and devoted as any of the women descended from her, heedful of the wild inheritance in their blood, lest it poison the strong and bitter tide of New England ancestors. Catalina was the first to feel pride in that alien strain which did so much to distinguish her from the million, and was conscious that she owed to it her faculty to see and feel more in nature than the average Anglo-Saxon.

Over, in the almost empty car, lit by a solitary and smoking lamp, listened attentively as she groped her way through the mysterious labyrinths in her brain, expressing herself ill, for she was little used to egotistical ventures. It cannot be said that he understood, being himself a typical product of the extremest civilization that exists in the world today; but he saw will-o'-the-wisps in a fog bank, and thought her more interesting than ever.

XIII

THE train was two hours late. It crawled into the dark little station of Baeza, and Over and Catalina sat down at once in the restaurant, leaving the problem of the night until later. But, hungry as the Englishman was, that problem dulled the flavor of a fair repast. How was he to protect the girl from curiosity and speculation, possibly coarse remark; above all, from self-consciousness? It would be assumed at the inn as a matter of course that they were a young couple, and he turned cold as he pictured the landlord conducting them upstairs to the usual room with a bed in each corner. He heartily wished it was he who spoke the Spanish language and that his companion were afflicted with his own distracting ignorance; but he must interpret through her, and to discuss the matter with her beforehand was, to him, impossible. For the first time he wished she were with the Moultons in Alcazar.

Catalina did not share his embarrassment. With her hat pulled low that she might attract the less attention, she was eating her dinner with the serenity of a child. As he seemed indisposed to conversation she did not utter a word until the salad was placed beside them, and then she met his disturbed and roving eye.

"You look fearfully tired," she said, smiling. "While you are drinking your coffee I will go and talk to that man behind the counter and see what can be done about tonight. You look as if you ought to be in bed this minute."

"Ah!" He was taken aback, and still helpless. "I must ask you not to talk to anyone unless I am with you. They would never understand it. We had better cut the desert and the coffee and secure what rooms there may be. I suppose most of these people are going on, but a few may remain."

They went together to pay their score, and Catalina asked the functionary behind the counter if there were rooms above for travelers. He

replied, with the haughty indifference of the American hotel clerk, that there were not. She demanded further information, and he merely shrugged his shoulders, for it is the way of the Spaniard to know no man's business but his own. But Catalina stood her ground, told him she would stand it till dawn, or follow him home; and finally, overcome by her fluency in invective, he unwillingly parted with the information that behind the station across the road there was a small inn above a cantina.

"I am halfway sorry we did not leave a message for Mr. Moulton and go on," said Over as they stood in the inky darkness and watched the train pull out of the station. "Probably, however, he would never have got it—well, there is nothing to do but make the best of it."

They crossed the sandy road, guided by the glimmer of the cantina. Here they found the host serving two men that would have put the Guardia Civile on the alert. He greeted the strangers politely, however, and called his wife. She came in a moment, smiling and comely, followed by a red-haired girl holding a candle.

Catalina, warned by her recent interview, uttered a few of the flowery amenities that should lead up to any request in Spain. The woman, beaming with good-will, took the candle from her daughter's hand, motioned to the girl to take the portmanteaus, and without apology for her humble lodgings, piloted them out into the dark, through another doorway and up a rickety stair. Over, feeling as if he were being led out to be shot by the enemy, saw his worst fears verified. She threw open the door of a tiny blue-washed room, and there were the two little beds, the more conspicuous as they were unaccompanied but for a tin washing-stand. It opened upon a balcony, and, despite the bareness, it was so clean and inviting it seemed to make a personal appeal not to be judged too hastily. Over was unable to articulate, but Catalina said serenely: "We wish two rooms, *señora*."

"Two!" cried the woman; and Over understood both the word and the expression of profound amazement.

"Yes, two." There was no voluble explanation from Catalina. She looked the woman straight in the eyes, and repeated: "Two rooms, and quickly, please; we are very tired."

The woman's eyes were wide with curiosity, but before Catalina's her tongue lost its audacity. She replied promptly enough, however:

"But I have no other. It is only by the grace of God I have this. The train was late, the diligences were put away for the night; there were many and my house is small. I see now, the señor is the señorita's brother—but for one night, what matter?"

Catalina turned to Over. "There is no other room," she said.

Over went into the apartment, and lifting a mattress and coverings from one of the beds, returned to the hall and threw them on the floor.

"I shall be comfortable here," he said curtly, glad of any solution. "Go to bed. I prefer this, anyhow, for I didn't like the looks of those men downstairs. Good night."

"Good night," said Catalina; and she went into the room and closed the door.

"The English are all mad," said the woman, and she went to find a candle for the hallway guest.

It is doubtful if either Over or Catalina ever slept more soundly, and the bandits, if bandits they were, went elsewhere to forage. At dawn Catalina was dressed and hanging over the balcony watching the retreating stars. She heard a mattress doubled and flung into a corner. The room was in order. She flashed past Over and down the stairs. "Go in and dress," she called back. "There is plenty of water, for a wonder."

And he answered: "Stay in front of the window, where I could hear you if you called."

Early as it was, the woman and her brood were in the kitchen at the back of the house, and she agreed to supply bread and cream for breakfast and

make a tortilla for the travelers' lunch. Over came down in a few moments with his coffee-pot and lamp, and they had their breakfast on a barrel-top in front of the inn, as light-heartedly as if embarrassment had never beset them. Life begins early in Spain, notwithstanding its reputed predilection for the morrow, and as they finished breakfast several rickety old diligences drew up between the inn and the station.

There were no passengers for the three little towns, and Over and Catalina went in one of the diligences to Baeza, twelve miles distant. They spent a happy and irresponsible day roaming about the dilapidated sixteenth-century town, and divided their tortilla out in the country in the great shadow of the Sierra Nevada. They retained their spirits over the rough and dusty miles of their return, but lost them suddenly as they approached the station. The train, however, was three hours late this evening, and they philosophically dismissed the Moultons and enjoyed their dinner. They lingered over the sweets and coffee, then paced up and down the platform, the Englishman smoking and feeling like a truant schoolboy. Nevertheless, he was not sorry that the end of the intimacy approached. The results of proximity might oftentimes be casual, but that mighty force was invariably loaded with the seeds of fate, and he knew himself as liable to love as any man. With the oddest and most enigmatic girl he had ever met, who allured while striving to repel, as devoid of coquetry as a boy or a child, yet now and then revealing a glimpse of watchful femininity, to whom Nature had given a wellnigh perfect shell; and thrown upon his protection in long days of companionship—he summed it up curtly over his pipe: "I should make an ass of myself in a week."

He had had no desire to marry since the days of his more susceptible youth—he was now thirty-four—and, although rich girls had made no stronger appeal to him than poor girls, he was well aware that the dowerless beauty was

not for him. He was too good a soldier and too much of a man to be luxurious in taste or habit, and although a guardsman, he was born into the out-of-door generation that has nothing in common with the scented lapdogs made famous by the novelists of the mid-Victorian era. But when not at the front he indulged himself in liberty, many hours at cricket and golf, the companionship of congenial spirits, a reasonable amount of dining out and an absolute freedom from the petty details of life. Traveling third class amused him, the English aristocrat being the truest democrat in the world and wholly without snobbery. Single, his debts worried him no more than bad weather in London; but married, he must at once set up an establishment suited to his position.

He had distinguished himself in South Africa, and his county, rich and poor, had, upon his return, at the very end of the war, met him at the station and pulled his carriage over the miles to his father's house, some two thousand men and women cheering all the way. There had been so many in London to lionize since that war, to which pampered men had gone in their heyday and returned gray and crippled, that when he went up for the season he was merely one of a galaxy eagerly sought and fêted; but life had never slipped along so easily and pleasantly, and after three years of hardship and many months of painful illness, it had made a double appeal to a battered soldier, still half an invalid. He had dismissed the serious things of life as he landed in England, and devoutly hoped for a five years' peace. Therefore was he the less inclined to fall in love, valuing peace of mind no less than surcease for the body. Catalina was by no means penniless, and certainly would make a heroic soldier's wife; but they had not a tradition in common, and he saw clearly that if he loved her at all he should love her far more than had suited his indolent habit when not soldiering. Hence he welcomed the return of the Moultons, and even meditated a retreat.

"A moon in the Alhambra would finish me," he thought, glancing up at the waxing orb fighting its way through a stormy mass of black and silver.

A bell rang; a whistle—the only energetic thing about a Spanish train—shrieked and blustered above the slowing headlight of an engine approaching from the north.

"You stand here by the Thirds and I'll go up to where the Firsts will stop," began Catalina, but Over held her arm firmly within his.

"No," he said peremptorily, "you must not be by yourself a moment in this crowd. You would be spoken to, probably jostled, at once, and no doubt a rough lot will get out. We will both stand here by the restaurant door."

"I am not afraid," said Catalina haughtily.

"That is not the point."

"I was near coming to Spain by myself."

"What has that to do with me?"

She gave a little growl and attempted to free herself by a sudden wrench, but he held her, and she stood sullenly beside him as the train wandered in and gave up its load. In a few moments she had forgotten her grievance and stared at him with expanded eyes.

"Let us go to the telegraph office," he said. "Mr. Moulton must have sent a message." But at the office there was naught but the official and the cigarito and polite indifference.

"They missed the train, that goes without saying," said Over. "They are sure to arrive in the morning, I should think, as they can travel comfortably enough at night first class. Will you ask what time the morning train arrives?"

It was due nearly an hour before the train would leave for Granada.

"You will hear your nightingales tomorrow evening," said Over cheerfully. "The Moultons will never stay here all day."

With this assurance they parted, Over sleeping in another little blue-washed room—the entire fonda had

been reserved for the Moultons—and the next morning they drank their coffee from the barrel-top, while their kind and now indifferent landlady made tortillas for the party.

The train arrived on time; and without the Moultons. In the telegraph office the gentleman of leisure was still smoking, but after inquiring indolently into Over's name and rank, and demanding to see his cards and correspondence, he produced a telegram.

It read:

Toledo, Hotel Castilla.—MOULTON.

"Toledo!" cried Catalina. "I want to go to Granada! That is what I came to Spain for. If they go north that far they won't come south again—they will take the steamer at Genoa. I won't go."

"It is by no means certain they won't return; it is only a matter of a day. Doubtless they are still dodging Jesus Maria. I think we had better join them. It is useless to expect explanations by wire. Granada can wait a few days, and Toledo, in its way, must be quite as interesting."

"Well, I'll soon find out," announced his companion.

XIV

DURING the journey to Toledo Catalina stared sulkily out of the window or slept with her head against the side of the car. She ignored Over's attempts to converse until, with chilling dignity, he retired to the opposite end of the compartment and wondered how he could have thought of love in connection with a bad-tempered child. He was delighted at the prospect of reunion with the orthodox Moultons, and understood something of their serene contempt for originality. It is true that Catalina asleep, with the deep vermilion in her cheeks, her tumbled head drooping, looked so innocent and lovely that she set him to wondering regretfully why there was no such thing as perfection in woman; and from thence it was but a step to

imagine Catalina with the qualities and training that would make her the ideal of man. There was no harm in indulging oneself in idyllic imagining, by way of variety. Over concluded; doubtless it was good for the soul.

Whatever the motive, his imagination performed unaccustomed feats during the drowsy afternoon, while his companion slept and the other occupants of the car, few in number, smoked and said little. It pictured Catalina ten years hence; she would then be thirty-three, an age he had always found sympathetic in woman; she would have seen the world, have adapted herself to many new conditions, and in the process learned self-control, pared off the jagged edges of her egoism, and supplemented her beauty with a distinction of manner and style that would compel the homage of the best societies of the world.

He had seen what she was capable of, and he suspected that she was ambitious. It was her love of solitude and dislike of mere men and women that had swathed her so deeply in her crudities; but if she carried out her intention of living for some years in England and Europe, and cultivated the right sort of people, the transformation was almost certain. Perhaps it would be worth while to ask his mother to take care of her in England. Lady "Peggy" Over was a clever, warm-hearted woman of the simple old-fashioned aristocracy, who offered her sons no assistance in choosing their wives and had the broadest tolerance for the vagaries of young people. With her lively mind and humor she would win upon Catalina at once, and her complete honesty of nature would finish the conquest of a girl whose hatred of sham was almost fanatical.

Catalina opened her eyes upon him, half awake, and he asked her impulsively: "What is your ambition? What do you want?"

She answered sleepily, but without hesitation: "To have four children."

He was too astonished to speak for

a moment; then he asked feebly; "Is that all?"

"No," she said, now quite awake. "I want to meet all the most interesting people in the world, and read the most interesting books, and show a lot of other people what frauds and useless creatures they are; but I love children as much as I detest most people, and I'll never be contented till I have four. I don't see why you look so dumfounded! What is there so remarkable in wanting children?"

"Oh, nothing," he said soothingly. "Perhaps we can see Toledo in a moment."

Mr. Moulton met them at the station. His face was flushed and his manner perturbed, but he shook their hands cordially and protested that he had never been so glad to lay eyes on anyone.

"Let us walk up," said Catalina, and she strode on ahead. The men followed, Mr. Moulton talking with nervous volubility.

"Of course, I did not blame you, my dear Catalina," he reiterated. "Such a contretemps in Spain is easy enough. Mrs. Moulton is still a little upset, but you know what—er—invalids are, and I beg you to be patient—"

"It won't worry me in the least. But why this change of front? Why didn't you come to Baeza?"

"That wretched peasant saw us as I was craning my neck looking for you, and reached the train in three bounds. Of course, we were safe in the first-class carriage, and at Alcazar I had a brilliant idea. We drove to the hotel, as usual, with all our baggage, and that mountebank—I shall never pronounce his impious name—supposed we were settled for the night. After dinner I told the landlord—through the kind medium of a Frenchman who spoke both English and Spanish—that being much annoyed by this creature, we had determined to change our itinerary and go direct to Madrid where we could call upon our minister to protect us. We then took the night train and were under way a good hour before it was

time for the man to appear with his guitar. I even bought tickets for Madrid, and as we changed cars at midnight, we were practically unobserved. We are very comfortable and are in time for a grand fête."

"How is Lydia?" Catalina asked drily.

"The poor child is very nervous, but most thankful to be rid of the man. By the way, I telegraphed as soon as I arrived in Toledo."

"This is Spain," said Over.

The hint of Mrs. Moulton's displeasure had fallen on heedless ears. They were crossing the Alcantara Bridge that leads through the ancient gateway of the same name up to one of the most beautiful cities to look upon in the world. Toledo, the lofty outpost of the range of mountains behind the raging Tagus, is an almost perpendicular mass of rock on all sides but one, its uneven plateau crowded with palaces and churches, tiny plazas and narrow winding streets, a mere roof of tiles from the Alcazar, which stands on its highest point, but from below a wild yet symmetrical outcropping of the rock itself. Founded, so runs the legend, by a son of Noah, certainly the ancient capital of the Goths and the scene of much that was terrible and romantic in their history, a stronghold of the Moors, who left here as elsewhere their indelible imprint, and later of the sovereigns of Castile, equally inaccessible from the vega and the defile of the Tagus, it was one of the most impregnable cities in history so long as a man was left to dispute the gates on the steep road rising from the plain. It is today a sarcophagus of ancient history, compact, isolated, little disturbed by the outer world, yet with an intense and vivid life of its own.

Catalina hung over the bridge and stared down into the rocky gorge where the river had torn its way, and soldiers of every nation of the ancient world had been hurled, cursing and shrieking and praying, from the beetling heights above. Impervious to Mr. Moulton's kindly hints, she led them through the old streets of the Moors, streets so

narrow they were obliged to walk like stalking Indians, but with beautiful old balconied houses on either side, and glimpses of luxurious patio within; not pausing before the broad gray front of the hotel until the trio of cousins had awaited her some fifty minutes.

Mrs. Moulton was so far the reverse of a cruel and vicious woman that she had been, for the good of her soul, too amiable and self-sacrificing for at least thirty years of her life. Not fine enough to have developed loveliness of character, there had perhaps been too few opportunities for reaction, or if occurring they had been conscientiously stifled. A good woman, but not of the most distinguished fiber, the effacement of self for the few she loved had been but a higher order of selfishness, and when for the first time in her life a positive hatred possessed her it found her without that greatness which ignores, and foregoes revenge. Catalina, it must be confessed, would have tried the patience of far more saintly characters than Mrs. Moulton, and when to a natural antipathy was added the daily jarring of long-tried nerves the wonder was that the crisis did not come sooner.

But Mrs. Moulton was accustomed to self-control and to the exercise of the average amount of Christianity. Moreover, she had her standards of conduct, and held all exhibitions of feeling to be vulgar. Therefore, in spite of her growing and morbid desire to humble Catalina, she might have forborne to force an issue; and perhaps, had circumstances favored the alien, have grimly, however unwillingly, triumphed once more over self.

But these last days had unraveled her nerves. To passionate sympathy for her pale and persecuted daughter, misled in the first instance by the daily example of a barbarian, had recently been added a night of hideous discomfort; when, not one of the four speaking a language but their useless own, and without the invaluable Baedeker, they had fled from a ridiculous peasant, changing trains at mid-

night, waiting hours at way stations, arriving at Toledo in the gray cold dawn, hungry, worried, exhausted, to find neither omnibus nor cab at the station.

As Mrs. Moulton toiled up the steep road through the carven gates of terrible and romantic memory, she had heartily wished that modern enterprise had blown up the rock with dynamite or run an elevator from the Tagus. It was then that her hatred of Catalina—who at least with her knowledge of foreign languages had been an acceptable courier—became an obsession, and she could have shrieked it out like any common virago. The emotional wave had receded, but left a dark and poisonous deposit behind.

It was easy to convince herself that Catalina had lost the train at Albacete on purpose. When her husband had received Captain Over's telegram she had assumed that the Englishman had persuaded the girl to return, eager, no doubt, to be rid of her. She was not prone to think evil, and had one of her daughters, or the approved young women of her circle, been left with a young man at a way station for two days and nights, she might have given way to nerves but never to suspicion. But as the crowning iniquity of the author of her downfall it gave her the opportunity she had coveted, and she burned to take advantage of it.

When Catalina finally announced herself Mrs. Moulton was standing in the middle of her bedroom, and Jane was reading by the window. The latter nodded as the prodigal entered, and returned to her book.

"Well," said Catalina amiably, "how are you all? I am glad you are rid of the peasant at last. Where is Lydia?" She paused, blinking under the cold glare of Mrs. Moulton's eyes. "What is the matter?" she asked haughtily. "Cousin Lyman said you were angry, but you must have known how I was left. I am sorry you didn't have Baedeker with you." This was an unusual concession for Catalina, but something in the bitter and con-

temptuous face made her vaguely uneasy.

"You were left on purpose," said Mrs. Moulton deliberately.

Catalina made a quick step forward, the breath hissing through her teeth. She looked capable of physical violence, but Mrs. Moulton continued in the same cold even tones:

"You remained behind in order to be alone with Captain Over for two days and nights. You are not fit to associate with my daughters. You are a wicked, abandoned creature, and I refuse, I absolutely refuse, to shelter your amours. If you appeal to my husband, I shall tell him to choose between us."

Catalina fell back, staring. Innocent she might be, but not ignorant. It was impossible to mistake the woman's meaning, and in a flash she understood that by the evil-minded evil might be read into her adventure. It was then, however, that she showed herself throughbred. Her anger left her as abruptly as it had come. She drew herself up, bowed impersonally, and left the room.

Mrs. Moulton, trembling, sank into a chair, and Jane, protesting that her parent had behaved like an empress, fetched the aromatic salts. But Mrs. Moulton, having unburdened her hate, had parted with its sustaining power, and was flat and cowed in the reaction.

"Does it pay?" she demanded again and again. "Does it pay?"

XV

FOR two days Catalina disappeared. Mr. Moulton, distracted, appealed to the police. He knew that his wife had been severe, but the wicked words of her utterance were never repeated to him. But Mrs. Moulton, although spiritually debased, loved Catalina none the better for her condition, and protested that no one was so well able to take care of herself, even demanding that they move on and leave her in charge of the consul. To this Mr.

Moulton would not harken, and he and the equally disquieted Englishman patrolled the streets and haunted the headquarters of the police. The day of the fête dawned and nothing had been seen or heard of Catalina.

Over was alone when he saw her. The narrow streets were packed with people, and turning aside to make way for a religious procession, he had become separated from the Moultons. He walked slowly, his head thrown back, gazing at the gay and beautiful sight above him. From every high window and balcony costly brocades and tapestries, embroidered shawls and Oriental carpets depended. The brown old houses, craggy as their high perch itself, warmed into life with the flaunting color. In the balconies were aristocratic men and women, the latter wearing the mantilla, held high with a comb, caught back with a rose. It was an enchanting sight; and above all was the dazzling blue and gold of the sky; through the chatter of the good-natured crowd wandered the strains of solemn music, and his was the only alien face.

He was staring upward at a little balcony from which hung a magnificent blue silk shawl, embroidered and fringed with white, and admiring the mantillas and roses, the languid fans and fine eyes above it, when Catalina came through the window behind and looked down upon him. She, too, wore a mantilla, the white mantilla of Spanish lace he had watched her buy in Barcelona. A red rose held it above her left ear and in her hand she carried her fan. She had also assumed the lofty dignity of the Spanish woman of high degree, and she had never looked so beautiful. For a moment she returned his gaze stolidly, and he fancied she meant to cut him; then she bowed, said something to one of her companions, pointed to the stern brass-bound door below, and disappeared.

A moment later the door opened and he was shown into the patio, a shadowy retreat from the glare and noise of the street, full of palms and pomegranates, roses and lilies, with a cool fountain

playing, and many ancient chairs of iron and wood.

Catalina was standing by the fountain, looking as Spanish as if these old walls had encircled her cradle. She shook hands with him cordially.

"I have had a bad time," she said, "and hated you, as well as the Moultons, but it was unreasonable and I am over it. You were as nice and kind as possible, and I shall always remember it. Don't ask me what that dreadful woman said. I shall forget it, but I shall never speak to any of them again, and I should be glad if you would tell them so, and that I shall remain here until they leave."

His mind grasped at once the substance of Mrs. Moulton's diatribe; he had given the subject no thought before. He turned hot and then cold, and involuntarily took a step nearer to the girl with a fierce instinct of protection. Catalina may have understood, for a spot of color appeared on her high cheek-bones, but she continued calmly:

"Of course you want to know where I have been and what I am doing in this house. When I left the hotel I went directly to the archbishop and told him as much as was necessary, using as passport a circular letter the fathers of the Mission of Santa Barbara had given me. He brought me here at once. The Señora Villéna has this beautiful house, but is poor—and so kind. I have enjoyed the change, I can tell you."

"You certainly are more in your element. I am glad it has turned out so well. I have been very uneasy."

"Have you? Did you think I had thrown myself into the Tagus, or was wandering about roofless with my big grip in my hand?"

"It was my knowledge of your good sense, familiarity with the language and winning manner—when you choose to exert it—that permitted me to go to bed at night. Nevertheless, you are not the woman to travel alone in Spain. What are your plans?"

"What are the Moultons' plans?"

"They have had enough of Spain—of travel, for that matter, and they are

still in dread of Jesus Maria. They will go from here to Barcelona, take a boat for Genoa and remain there until their steamer arrives. They say that Italy will feel like home after Spain."

"Then I shall go from here to Granada. Perhaps I can persuade someone to chaperon me, but if not I shall go alone. Nothing shall cheat me out of Granada."

"If you find no one else I shall go with you."

The red spots spread down to her throat, but she lifted her head higher. "No," she said; "I suppose it does not look right."

He cursed Mrs. Moulton for shattering the serene innocence of the girl; nevertheless, something even more captivating had replaced it. "I shall go," he repeated, "unless I can persuade you to return to America with your relatives. Then my mind will be at rest. But as long as you are alone in Spain I shall do my best to protect you. If you forbid me to travel with you, well and good. I shall merely follow—that is to say, be your companion on the trains. In the towns we need not meet unless you wish it. You can always put yourself under the protection of the woman of the house and employ a duenna. But do adopt me as a brother and dismiss all nonsensical ideas from your mind."

For the first time her eyes fell before his. She turned away abruptly. "You are very good," she said. "Come upstairs and meet the señora and her daughter. They are charming people."

A few moments later, as they were standing on the balcony, she said to him: "They are taking me to the bullfight this afternoon. Shall you go?"

"Possibly. But I am surprised that you wish to go. It is a beastly exhibition and no place for you."

"I am going," she said imperturbably. "It is a part of Spain, and I should as soon think of missing a religious festival like this. Besides, I have seen bull-fights in Southern California. You may as well come with us. Of course, Cousin Lyman is not going."

"Probably not. Very well, I will go with you, if your friends will have me. I must lunch at the hotel with the Moultons and set their minds at rest; but it is an hour until then. Would you care to walk about the streets and see the crowd?"

The Señora Villéna was very large and the day was warm, but she amiably consented to walk as far as the cathedral in the wake of her guest.

"I have not been out alone since I came to her," said Catalina, with a sigh, as she walked beside Over up the street. "At Granada I know of a *pension*, and liberty will be sweet again."

Over's eyes twinkled as he looked at the face between the soft edges of the mantilla.

"Your new role is vastly becoming. I had no idea that two days of Old World discipline could effect such a change. You look as if you had always walked with a duenna at your heels."

"So I have, nearly always. I never was on the street alone in my life until my mother died. You think me improved?" she added quickly.

"I did not say that."

"I have always thought your bluntness the best thing about you—I like the short skirt and covert coat best," she said defiantly.

"They do very well to disguise you on the train; but if I never saw you again I should prefer to remember you as you are now—or as you were that night in Tarragona. You hardly deserve your beauty, you know."

And then, in a new spirit of coquetry, born perhaps of the mantilla, into whose silken mesh many a dream no doubt had flowed, she lifted her chin, dropped her eyelashes for a second, flashed him a swift personal glance. Before he could adjust himself to the new phase, however, she had dismissed it and remarked that she hoped not to meet the Moultons; and, unaccountably perturbed, he replied that they were sure to be fatigued and resting for luncheon.

It would have been easy to avoid them in the dense crowd packed into the plaza before the cathedral, waiting

for the procession to pass. Over and Catalina paused a few moments to look at the superb Gobelins with which the façade of the cathedral was hung, and then ran the gamut of the beggars and entered the cloister.

"I shall go into the Chapel of the Incarnation and pray," said the Señora Villéna, "and meet you here in half an hour—no?"

The cathedral of Toledo is one of the world's treasures, and all the world should see it; but for those who would or must read the sights of Europe a hundred descriptions of this vast complex dream in early Gothic and late, Renaissance and Baroque, have been written; and the best is forgotten at the end of an hour's visit.

It was almost deserted, and Over and Catalina walked slowly toward the Capilla Mayor, through the rich brown silence of the nave, whispering occasionally, but overpowered by the forest of shafts uplifting an immensity of vaulting before which the eye reeled. The centuries of carving, as various as the peoples that had come and gone, crystallizing even the broken voice of the Moor, melted into a harmony comparable only, said Catalina, to the wonders of a California mountain forest—of redwood and pine, madroño and oak, and giant ferns as delicate as the lace of her mantilla. There were high vaultings, too, where the sun never ripened the moss on the earth, and endless cryptograms wrought before the hand of man had taken the message of the gods.

Over replied promptly: "I don't believe half you have told me about California. Next year I shall obtain leave of absence and visit it—that is, if you will be my cicerone."

"Why not this year?"

"Shall I?"

"It is all the same to me, but I may not be there next year. I need Europe. Of course, I know that I am a sort of cowboy."

"Ah!" He hardly knew whether to be gratified or not. "Don't desert your ranch altogether—nor surrender all the individuality it has given you."

If you should be the great lady in Europe and ranch girl at home—what a fascinating combination!"

"Well, I can be anything I choose, and on five minutes' notice, too."

"I am sure of it—but which is the real you? I think I know—then I am all at sea."

She gave him another swift upward glance, but she replied sedately: "The worst, of course. That is what people always decide when a person suddenly reveals himself in a bad light. Twenty other sides may have been exhibited, but it is the revelation of the worst that always inspires the phrase, 'At last he has shown himself in his true colors.'"

"Then you are too philosophical to condemn Mrs. Moulton utterly?"

"She has taught me the extent of my philosophy, so I forgive her—and ignore her existence."

He made no reply, for he saw the Moultons not three yards away. They were in the Capilla Mayor, their necks craned in a vain attempt to register a permanent impression of the gorgeous coloring, the phalanxes of saints, the riotous beauty of carving on wall and arch and tomb. While he hesitated, Mr. Moulton brought down his tired eyes and they rested on Catalina. He gave a sharp exclamation of pleasure and hurried forward, his hand outstretched. Catalina had included him in her wrath, but she forgave him instantly, and simultaneously conceived a stroke of revenge. Mrs. Moulton and Jane retreated, but Lydia ran to Catalina and kissed her.

"Where have you been?" she cried. "We have been just wild. How perfectly sweet you look in that mantilla!"

Catalina explained, and Mr. Moulton drew a long sigh of relief. "I shall never worry about you again, my dear child. And now tell me what you wish to do. I trust you will become reconciled—"

"I shall remain in Spain perhaps for some months—I have canceled my passage. But I shall like to see you again. Will you come to the Casa Villéna immediately after luncheon?

I have a little plan to propose to you."

"Certainly I will—but is your decision irrevocable?"

"Quite. Perhaps I shouldn't keep you now. And my duenna must be waiting for me."

She nodded and turned away, but Lydia followed and took her arm.

"I can go back to the hotel with Captain Over," she said to her father, and the two girls walked down the nave with heads together, oblivious of the half-amused, half-sulky man in their wake.

"Well, what of Jesus Maria?"

"I have given up all hope of ever seeing him again."

"Hope? Do you want to?"

"I do and I don't. Of course it had to end sooner or later, but—well—I was fascinated! And there is so little to look back upon! However—it was great fun imagining what things might happen, and all the while to be quite safe under the paternal wing. I suppose if I had seen him alone I really wouldn't have kissed him—I probably should have run away in disgust—but I enjoyed it all in imagination. Now, I shall be rather relieved when I am safely out of Spain, for I know that he was quite serious. When we were running away from Albacete and then from Alcazar, I felt as serious as he did; I was really romantic and love-lorn; but I took myself in hand when I arrived here, and now I am quite sensible again."

"What a tangle! Is that the way people fall in love—and out again?" Catalina felt puzzled and depressed. Life suddenly seemed commonplace, love a sort of cap-and-bells, to be worn now and again when convenient.

"Well, I wish you good luck," she said. "Write me when you are really engaged and I'll send you a lot of jewels from our California mines—tourmalines and chrysoprases and turquoises and garnets and beryls. I have jugs full of them."

Lydia's eyes expanded. "Jugs full! They cost frightfully in New York. Will you really send me some?"

"Dozens."

"What a fairy princess you are! I am only beginning to appreciate you—and now you are throwing us over—for good and all!"

"Good-bye," said Catalina, kissing her. "At two, Captain Over, and don't forget to bring Cousin Lyman—and make no confidences," she murmured.

XVI

"But, my dear Catalina—why, of course, I cannot go—the idea is preposterous—"

"Now you are talking by the book. Why was Europe made except for the American to play in and refresh himself for the same old duties at home? And for a man of your intelligence to balk at a bull-fight—"

"It isn't that I exactly balk—I mean I am not squeamish—and I could look away at the worst part—but I do not approve of bull-fights, and think it wrong to lend my countenance—"

"The bull-fight will go on just the same; and no one race is good enough to condemn the customs of another. See the world impartially and then go your own gait. Besides, you have come to study Spain, and how can you pretend to know it unless you see it at its most characteristic amusement? Don't look at the arena if you had rather not—but think of the opportunity to see Spain *en masse* at its very worst!"

"There is much in what you say, but—great heaven!—suppose it ever were known in America that I had been to a bull-fight! I should lose the confidence of a million people—I might be driven out of the church—"

"There aren't a dozen Americans in Toledo—and the bull-ring holds five thousand people. You can sit in the back of the box. No one will be looking at anything but the bull-fight, anyhow."

Mr. Moulton drew a long sigh. He wanted very much to go to the bull-fight; and away from his family and

alone with Catalina—whom he could never hope to influence—in this holiday crowd of dark eager faces he felt almost emancipated and reckless. Over was ahead with the Señora Villéna and her daughter, and they were slowly making their way up the Calle de la Puerta Llana toward the Plaza Ayuntamiento. They reached it in a moment. It was so crowded with cabs and large open carryalls waiting to take people to the bull-ring that there was little room for foot passengers. The carryalls were very attractive with their six mules apiece, hung with bells and decorated with worsted fringe, and Mr. Moulton sighed again.

Before the archbishop's palace a cab awaited the Señora Villéna. It held but three seats, and she turned with polite hesitation to Mr. Moulton and Captain Over, as they all stood, united at last, beside it.

"I am so sorry," she said, "but I fear—"

"We are going in one of those omnibuses," said Catalina promptly. "I am simply dying to go that way—with the crowd; and of course you will not object, señora, so long as my cousin is with me."

The señora smiled, much relieved. "Bueno," she said. "And I will await you at the entrance to the *sombra*."

"You are a little wretch," said Over as Mr. Moulton, flushed and excited, tucked the señora and her daughter into their cab.

"It won't hurt him, and he will be sure to let it out to Cousin Miranda."

"Oh, I see!" He laughed and went to the emptiest of the rapidly filling carryalls to secure their seats. Catalina followed immediately, holding Mr. Moulton firmly by the arm. But that beacon light of American literature had the instinct of the true sport in the depths of his manifold compromises. The die was cast, he had weakly permitted Catalina to commit him, and he would enjoy himself without his conscience.

And it would have been a far more conscience-stricken man than this to

have remained unaffected by the gay animation that quickened the very mules. The venders were shrieking their wares; men and women, their hard faces glowing, were fighting their way good-naturedly toward the omnibuses, whose drivers cracked their whips and shouted invitations at so much a head. And then, suddenly, in a corner of the plaza appeared the picadóres in their medieval gorgeousness of attire, astride the ill-fated old nags.

It was the signal to start. The picadóres wheeled and led the way to the north, the cabs rattled after; then the willing mules were given rein, and jingling all their bells, plunged down the narrow streets to the highroad, scattering the foot passengers, who, a motley crowd of men, women, boys, girls, infants-in-arms, streamed after. On the rough dusty highway they passed a thousand more trudging toward the Plaza de Toros, eating and drinking as they went. They were come from the surrounding towns, many from Madrid, and even they led children by the hand and carried infants blinking in the strong sunlight. They cheered the picadóres, who responded with the lofty courtesy of the medieval general on his way to the wars. Far below there was not a sign of life on the great vega, nor in the villas on the mountain slopes. All the little world about seemed to be crowded upon the knotted heights of Toledo.

When Catalina and her cavaliers arrived at the Plaza de Toros other crowds were struggling through the entrances, but at the door on the shady side where tickets were high there was no one at that moment but the Señora Villéna and her daughter.

They went up at once, the Americans and the Englishman as curious to see the crowd as the bull-fight. As the box was Catalina's, she had no difficulty to persuade the Villénas to occupy the front seats; she sat just behind with Captain Over, and in the obscure depths of the rear Mr. Moulton felt himself to be blest indeed.

"It seems incredible that they bring

children here," he said, as his untiring gaze roved over the rapidly filling amphitheatre. "No wonder they are callous when they are grown; but I'll not believe they can see such a sight unmoved at their tender years. I shall watch them with great interest."

It would be half an hour before the entertainment began, but only the boxes were reserved; long before the signal nearly every seat was occupied, from the vulnerable lower row up to the light Moorish arcade through which the sky looked even bluer than above. It was a various and picturesque sight to foreign eyes. Scarcely a woman wore a hat. There were many mantillas, of a texture and pattern so fine there could be no doubt of the breeding of the owners. A few wore the black rebosa, but by far the greater number were bareheaded, their hair very smooth, and ornamented with high combs, flowers or pins. There were enough handsome Spanish shawls on the shoulders of the women this fiery day to have furnished a bazaar—brilliant blue shawls heavily embroidered and fringed with white, black shawls, white shawls, red shawls, all of silk, all embroidered and fringed. And it was already a thirsty crowd. Venders were forcing their way between the seats, selling water out of jugs and wine out of skins, and even here the water made a wider appeal than the wine. It was anything but a cruel sea of faces, hard though the Spanish type may be. Many a group of women had their heads together, gossiping, no doubt, while the men waited in stolid expectation of the treat in store, signaled to brighter eyes, or discussed the chances of the day and the talents of the espádas, who would do the bulls to death.

"They all now take the sacrament," the señora informed Catalina, who translated for the benefit of the two men. "Last night they confessed and fasted, and their wives pray until the fight is over."

Mr. Moulton snorted, then reminded himself that he was pleasuring, and ordered his critical faculty into the depths of its shop.

"By Jovel!" said Over.

"Somebody you know?" asked Catalina. "Heavens, what a caricature!"

"She is a ripping nice woman, and a countywoman of your own—a Mrs. Lawrence Rothe, of New York. I met her about in London. Remember, now, she told me she was coming to Spain. She's a bit made up, but what of that? So many are, you know. You should see London at the fag end of the season."

"A bit!" Catalina lifted her nose with young intolerance. "Her hair looks like a geranium bed. Is that her son? He is rather good-looking."

"That is her husband; they have been married several years. He's quite a decent chap—keen on horses—he looks older than he is—thirty—I fancy. Still, I'm rather sorry for him."

"I should think so. She must be fifty."

"That is severe of you. She's probably getting on to forty-five—not more. I'm told she was a ripping fine woman five years ago, but she has had a lot of trouble—all her children refuse to speak to her, and she got a divorce to marry Rothe. She's really very jolly. If you will excuse me a minute I'll go and speak to her."

The woman, who was adjusting herself at some pains in the next box but one, was extremely tall and thin, and her blazing locks, admirably coiffée as they were above her broken but still handsome face, excited the comment of others than Catalina. She had sacrificed her face to her figure and had reached that definite age when women dye their hair with henna. But even forty is an age when the entire absence of flesh makes a woman look not youthful but like an old maid; and scarlet hair, that would harden a young face, is a searchlight above every hollow and patch of manufactured surface. In the case of Mrs. Rothe, however, so distinct was the air of good-breeding with which she carried her expensive charms, so proud, yet retiring, her manner, and so perfect her taste in dress, that she ran no risk of being mistaken for a cocotte. She was

stamped deeply and delicately with the brand of the New York woman of fashion, the difference between whom—the same may be said of the small groups of her kind in other great American cities—and the average "stylish" American is as marked in its way as the difference between the Parisian and the French provincial; indeed, the juxtaposition is even more unfortunate, for the French woman of the provinces is frankly dowdy, and hence escapes looking cheap. Even Catalina, in a moment, felt her unwilling admiration creeping forth to the subtle charm of perfect poise and grooming, the firm yet tactful suggestion of a race apart in a bulk of eighty millions of mere Americans.

Mrs. Rothe was talking to Over with a great show of animation, and her companion—a virile, good-looking young man, evidently college-bred—had greeted the Englishman with an enthusiasm suspicious in the traveling husband.

"She is going to Granada next week," whispered Over significantly, as he took his seat once more beside Catalina. "I have asked if I may take you to call on her tomorrow."

"Yes," said Catalina absently.

The president of the occasion, the Mayor of Toledo, had entered his box; the mounted police, in crimson and gold, to the sudden rush of martial music, were careering about the arena driving the stragglers to their seats. A moment later came the Paseo de la Cuadrilla, the procession of all the bull-fighters across the arena to the foot of the president's box—the espadas and their understudies, the banderilleros, the picadores and chulos, all gorgeous in the gold-embroidered short clothes and brocades of old Spain. None of them looked young, in spite of picturesque finery and pigtailed; and their smoothly shaven faces may best be described by the expressive Americanism, "tough"; but between bull-fights they do not live the lives of model citizens, and may be younger than they look; certainly their calling demands the agility and unbrittle brain cells of youth.

The president, who received them standing, bowed with much ceremony and then cast a key into the arena. It unlocked one of the dark cells, or toriles, adjoining the arena, where the first of the angry bulls was bellowing for light and space and dinner.

The picadóres with one exception retired, this hero of the first engagement taking his stand by the door whence all had emerged. The espádas, banderilleros and others of lower estate scattered at safe distances from the door of the torile, near which stood a chulo to direct the attention of the bull to the picadóre, lest he fly first at the unmounted men and disappoint the spectators of their whet of blood.

But the bull might have been rehearsed for his part. As the door of his torile was cautiously opened he flew straight at the blindfolded horse without a side glance or a roar; and not waiting for the teasing prod of the picadóre's pike, he bored his horns into the luckless animal's side and dragged out his entrails.

Catalina closed her eyes and turned her back—she felt horribly faint—then looked at Mr. Moulton. He also had turned his back, and his profile was green. Nevertheless, he had the presence of mind to observe a small boy of seven or eight years, whom he had singled out for psychological investigation. The boy looked bored.

"The worst is past for the moment," said Over to Catalina, and under cover of her mantilla he took her hand. "They will take the poor brute out, and the rest is pure sport." And Catalina, in a tensify of emotion, held fast to his hand during the rest of the performance, quite unconscious of the act.

The bull meanwhile had dashed for the glittering figures in the middle of the arena, his red horns looking as if they would rip the earth did they encounter nothing more inviting. Then came the graceful, agile antics of the banderilleros. After the chulos, with their flirting capes, had tormented and bewildered the bull for a few moments, first one banderillero and then another received him in full charge, leaping

aside as he lowered his horns to gore, and thrust the barbed darts, flaunting with colored ribbons, into the back of his neck. One man leaped clear over the bull, planting his darts in his flight. The next went over the wall of the arena into the narrow passage below the front row of seats, the bull in full tilt after him; but diverted by a chulo before he reached the wall.

It was true sport, and Catalina had forgotten her horror and was leaning forward with interest, when she gave a sharp cry and dug her nails into Over's hand. The picadóre, instead of retiring with his stricken horse, had leisurely ridden down the arena to see the sport, and there he sat serenely, the bright entrails of the poor brute upholding him hanging to the ground. But only for a moment. A young horse could have stood no more, and the old hack reserved for the sacrifice by an economical people suddenly sank and expired without a shiver. He had not uttered a sound as the bull ripped him open, but he had started and quivered mightily; he had been dying ever since, and collapsed in an instant.

Catalina cowered behind her fan. "I wish I had not come!" she gasped into Over's ear; Mr. Moulton was in need of consolement himself. "Why didn't you tell me?"

"I had never been to a bull-fight, and you told me you were an old hand at it."

"That was only child's play. And all the accounts of bull-fights I have ever read gave me the impression that the brutality was quite lost in the picturesqueness. This is hideously businesslike."

"That expresses it. And there is no enthusiasm as yet, because there has not been enough blood. It will take two more mangled horses to rouse them. Do you want to go?"

"After this act. I'd never sit through another; but I'll see this through."

The bull, the blood streaming from the wounds in his neck where the banderillas still quivered, plunged or darted about the arena, striving to reach his

tormentors; but, charge with the swiftness of the wind as he might, the leaping banderilleros either planted their darts or as dexterously plucked them out.

Suddenly the president rose and made a signal. The chulos and banderilleros enticed the bull to the right of the arena, and then the espada of the first engagement, hitherto posing for the admiration of the spectators, brought forth his sword and red muleta, and, walking with a sort of jaunty solemnity to the foot of the president's box, dedicated the death of the bull to the functionary whose honor it was to preside over this Corridas de Toros. He then walked over to the bull and waved the red cloth before his eyes.

In descriptions of bull-fights, especially when the espada is the hero of the tale, this final episode is always pictured as one of great excitement and involving a terrible risk. As a matter of fact, it is deferred until the bull is nearly exhausted. He has some fight left in him, it is true, and an inexperienced espada might easily be tossed. But those that oftener meet with death in the bull-ring are the banderilleros, who plant their darts as the bull charges. The legs of the picadores are padded, and they are always close enough to the wall to leap over if the bull brings the horse down.

Nothing could be tamer than the final scene in the first act of today's continuous performance. The espada danced about the bull for a few minutes, waving his red rag, and then, as the brute stood at bay with his head down, looking far more weary than belligerent, he stepped lightly to one side and drove his sword through the neck in the direction of the heart; a very neat and decent operation.

The bull did not drop at once, and there was no applause. He stood as if lost in thought for a few moments, and the espada was forgotten; he had failed. Then the bull turned, wavered, sank slowly to earth. Another door flew open and in rushed a team of four mules abreast, jingling with gala bells. The bull was dragged out at their tails,

and his trail of blood covered with fresh sand.

Catalina rose and bent over her duenna. "We will go now, señora," she said. "But you will remain, of course. I shall be well taken care of."

The Señora Villéna looked up with polite amazement. "You go? Are you ill, dear señorita? It has only begun. There are many more bulls to kill."

"I have had enough to last me for the rest of my life. *Hasta luego.*"

It was not every bull-fight that the señora sat in a box, and she settled back in her conspicuous seat thankful that the very bourgeois Señor Moulton had accompanied her singular charge.

As they were leaving the box Catalina saw that another picadore had entered and stood precisely as his predecessor had done, with the profile of his blindfolded horse toward the door of the torile. Fascinated, she stood rooted to the spot, some deep savage lust slowly awakening. Again the door of the torile was cautiously opened; again a bull, as if he had been rehearsed for the part, rushed straight at the helpless horse and buried his horns in his side. Catalina fancied she could hear the rip of the hide. But this bull was more powerful than the other. He lifted horse and rider on his horns, and the picadore, amid the belated enthusiasm of the multitude, leaped like a monkey over the wall, as the torn horse was tossed and fell cracking to the ground.

"Well," said Over, "have you had enough? They say, you know, that the horror soon passes and the fascination grows."

"I am glad to know it was not my Indian blood. I can now understand the fascination, but I shall never come again, all the same."

"We are none of us so far from savagery—Miss Shore, Mrs. Rothe."

They were in the passage behind the boxes, and Mrs. Rothe, who was pallid with disgust and delighted to express herself to a sympathetic woman—her young husband had sulkily torn him-

self from the ring—walked out with Catalina anathematizing the Spanish race. As they emerged, Mr. Moulton, green and very silent, disappeared. When he returned he was still pale, but normal once more, and after a speech of five minutes' duration, in which, ignoring the finer flowers of his working vocabulary, he consigned Spain to eternal perdition—Catalina had driven off with Mrs. Rothe—he was quite restored; and celebrated his recovery by a long pull at a wine-skin.

"I believe I am quite demoralized," he said cheerfully; and then, in company with Over and young Rothe—whose wife had amiably bidden him stay—he returned to the ring.

XVII

"I SAW that horse standing in the middle of the arena every time my mind was off guard!" said Catalina. "I woke up suddenly in the night with the hideous vision painted on the dark. I thought it was a judgment on me for going—that I should be haunted by it for the rest of my life. I believe it was Velasquez that banished it, but now I see it only at intervals."

"Perhaps," said Over, "we were wiser in going back. Our savagery was glutted and the imagination blunted. I was never so bored in my life as at the end of two hours of it, and I haven't thought of it since."

They were down in the crypt of the Escorial, in the Pantheon de los Reyes. Mrs. Rothe had offered to chaperon Catalina, and after two days of sight-seeing in Toledo had returned to Madrid to prepare for the trip south. She had seen the Escorial, and Catalina had come out alone with Over to the grim mass of masonry growing out of the Guadarrama Mountains, which from a distance looks like a phantom Casino for dead pleasures. They had wandered over it leisurely, lingering in the cell, with its scant leather furniture, where Philip II. in his monastic arrogance had received the ambassadors of Europe, and peering through the little

window of the inner cell upon the same sight that had held his dying gaze as he lay where they, as a great concession, were permitted to stand—a high mass in the chapel beyond. Then they had descended the fifty-nine steps into the black-and-gold vault where lies the dust of Charles V. and his successors to the throne of Spain, together with the queens who reigned, or mothered kings.

It is an octagonal apartment, with eight rows of niches, the kings on the right of the altar opposite the entrance, the queens on the left. Every sarcophagus, wrought in precisely the same elaborate pattern, is of black marble heavily encrusted with gold. The handful of dust that once was chief of the Holy Roman Empire is in the sarcophagus on a level with the top of the altar, and below him is Philip II. There is none of the picturesque confusion, the vagaries of different epochs, nor the lingering scent of death, of the Kaisergruft in Vienna. It might have been built yesterday, but it has the somber richness, the lofty dignity of Spain itself.

There were only two empty niches, and the guide informed his patrons that they awaited the young king, and the late Queen Isabella.

"Where is she now?" asked Catalina. "Why is she not here?"

"Oh, she must remain in the *Pudridero* for ten years," said the guide indifferently. "It is the custom. For some it is only five years, but she was very fat."

Thus was explained the purity of the atmosphere.

They ascended thirty-four of the steps and wandered through that white marble quarry, so brilliant, so new, so cheerful, where lie the lesser dead of the House of Spain. There are rows and rows and rows of them. In one octagonal snow-white mass, exactly resembling a huge wedding cake, the dust of many children has been put away, and the gay coat-of-arms embellishing it seems cut there to cheer the little ones in their last sleep. Many of the glistening sarcophagi are as yet

without inscription, awaiting, no doubt, Time and the Pudridero.

Above, in the Sacrista and Ante-Sacrista, they were shown the magnificent vestments and altar cloths with which the uneasy Isabella, as age waxed and time waned, propitiated Church and saints. And what she had been was discreetly forgotten; she had descended into the Pudridero fortified with the odor of sanctity.

They dismissed the guide and walked down the footpath to the lower town. For a time they preserved the tranquil silence which is so pleasant an episode in friendship; for although this friendship was barely three weeks old they had enjoyed so much in common, and companioned each other through so many annoyances, quarreled and made up so often, discovered so many points of sympathy and disagreement, that they had come to take their intimate association as a matter of course, while still their mutual interest deepened.

Over stole a glance at his companion as she looked aside into the gardens. She had restored the short skirt to favor, but to gratify Mrs. Rothe, who was shocked that so much beauty should go to waste, she had bought a gray silk blouse and a soft gray hat. Still, she looked more like the aggressive Catalina to whom he had grown accustomed before the brief distracting interval of the mantilla. He was well again after these three weeks of almost open-air life, much heat and uninterrupted freedom, and carried his tall, thin figure with military erectness, while his keen eyes seemed always laughing and there was a tinge of color in his dark face. He now not only looked the handsome, highly bred, intelligent Englishman who might have had an Italian or Spanish ancestor, but his magnetism was alive again, and the observant Catalina noticed that women stared at him, and occasionally lay in wait.

The hotel in Madrid where they were all stopping was full of travelers, and of deputies, many of whose wives were handsome, and dressed like women

who looked to life to furnish them with much amusement. Catalina speculated, and occasionally flew into a rage; for this trip in Spain he was all hers, if she never saw him again, and she was ready to spit fire upon possible rivals.

She was not in her most amiable mood today. The hotel was on the Puerta del Sol, the noisiest plaza in Europe. If the throngs that haunt it ever go to bed they must get up again at once, and Catalina, whose rest was broken, wondered how Spain had ever acquired the reputation for indolence. Moreover, it was quite true that the horrors of the bull-ring had haunted her almost to the point of obsession, and as she was too philosophical to wish the done undone, she took refuge in wrath against herself for not meeting the inevitable with her usual stolidity. She prided herself greatly upon her Oriental serenity, and looked upon her temper as a mere annex, which, no doubt, would be absorbed in time.

She turned suddenly with a little frown.

"There's an end to our traveling third. I broached the subject last night, and Mrs. Rothe looked as if I were stark mad. She has no snobbish scruples, but I suppose the poor thing has never been uncomfortable in her life. She asked me politely if I could not afford to go in the luxe that runs between here and Granada once a week, and, of course, I had to admit that I could. But I hate it. Couldn't we go third and meet her there?"

"I am afraid we have no good excuse—and it would take nearly two days by the slow trains. I rather think you should be thankful for the solution of Mrs. Rothe."

"You need not preach. I am. But when I come back to Europe I'm going to pretend to be a widow and travel by myself."

"Are you so in love with liberty?"

"Yes, I am."

"Well, I have always thought highly of it myself," he said lightly. "How do you like Mrs. Rothe, on the whole? Don't you find her a good sort, in spite of her foibles?"

"Follies, I should call them. Yes, I like her, if only because she has taught me that a person may be foolish and yet be wise; decorate herself like a *cocotte* and yet be a lady; violate half the rules one has been brought up on and yet be more estimable than the wholly virtuous—Cousin Miranda, for instance."

"Those would be dangerous deductions for some girls, but you have a ripping strong head. You ought to be as grateful for that as for your beauty."

"I wish you'd stop preaching."

"I never preached in my life," he said indignantly. "I was merely thinking aloud—uttering an obvious fact. I might add that I wish your temper was in the same class with your good looks and common sense."

"Well, it isn't. Do you approve of second marriages?"

"Never given a thought to the subject. If ever I married it would not be with the divorce court among the future possibilities."

"I was not thinking of divorce—although Mrs. Rothe, in a way, suggested the question. But I wonder how it feels to be married to a second man, especially if you were in love with the first—and most youthful marriages are for love. I picked up an old volume of Hawthorne the other day and came across the phrase, apropos of a second marriage, 'the dislocation of the heart's principles.' You never forget a phrase like that. And I have been wondering."

"One is so different at twenty-five and thirty-five. It is almost like being reborn. And so many youthful marriages result in disillusion and disappointment you can hardly blame the victims for taking another try at it. There is such a thing as sacrificing too much, and I fancy Mrs. Rothe has. Still, there is something magnificent in the big gambler, and Mrs. Rothe must have more courage than weakness to stake all on one throw."

"I don't know that I blame her if she never was happy before; but sometimes first love is real love—I mean, of course, when it is; mere fancies don't

count. But if one has any brain and a moderate amount of experience, one must know when one has been through the real thing. I am thinking now of two people who have been married long enough to find out. It is, no doubt, a matter for speculation before that; and that is the reason so many girls marry and are happy, even though they have broken their hearts several times—you see, women live the life of the imagination until they can live in fact. But when one has actually lived for some years with a man and loved him and he dies—that is what I mean. Don't you think it is the second-rate person who marries again? I have a theory in spite of Hawthorne that mistaken marriages don't count—I mean so far as the soul, the inner life is concerned—but that the real one counts forever, and that consolation with another partner presupposes shallowness and a lack of true spirituality. Fancy being equally happy and in deepest accord with two men. It is disgusting."

"It certainly is unideal. And every Jack has his Jill. I don't doubt that—don't in the least believe a man could be equally happy with any one of a hundred charming and intelligent women—not if he wanted the best out of life. But it is fortunate, perhaps, that the majority don't do any deep imagining. Then you think yourself capable of being faithful to a memory?" he added curiously.

"I know I could be—and happy, in a way; certainly far happier than if I settled down into a commonplace content with another man. It is the inner life that counts, nothing else."

"How do you know these things?"

"How did you know you would be brave in battle before you were ever in one?"

"Didn't. Was awfully afraid I'd funk it."

"Well!" she said, laughing, "perhaps that wasn't a fortunate comparison. But one can have intuitions without experience, especially if one lives a more or less solitary life, and thinks. However, I have visions of myself as an

old maid on the ranch with half a dozen adopted children. Falling in love is too hard work."

"Is it?"

"Well—it has always seemed so to me." She colored, more angry with herself than with him. "I don't pretend to any great amount of experience, but you are so ridiculously literal."

"You make cock-sure assertions and then get in a rage if I treat them respectfully. When I don't, you hiss at me like a snake. I don't complain, however, for I am now a qualified and hardened subject for matrimony."

"I suppose you mean that I will make all other women seem like angels. You will have something to thank me for."

"If any man ever has the courage to propose to you and you bend so far as to accept him, and his courage carries him as far as the altar, is it your intention to nag him through life as you have nagged me in the past three weeks?"

"Have I nagged you?" She turned her wondering eyes upon him. "I never—so I thought—have treated anyone so well."

"Great God!" But he was nonplussed at her sudden change of front, as he always was. "There have been times," he continued in a moment, "when you have been quite the most charming woman in the world."

Her wondering eyes were still on his, the rest of her face as immobile as the sphinx. He blundered along.

"I have been on the verge of proposing to you more than once."

"Why didn't you?"

"You have a way of breaking the spell just at the critical moment. I am never sure whether the you I am sometimes in love with is really there or only assumed, like one of your rarely worn gowns. There are times when I think you have every possibility, and others when I believe you to be merely a more subtle variety of the American flirt."

"Well, I'm sorry you didn't propose," she said sedately. "Now I sup-

pose you never will. You would have been quite a feather in my cap."

"That means you would not have accepted me?"

"Did you imagine I would?"

"There have been times when I did." He was now goaded into boldness.

"Well, you're just a conceited Englishman!" she cried furiously. "If I thought you meant that I'd never speak to you again!"

"Now I know where I am," he said serenely. "This, after all, is the only you I am at home with."

"Well, don't speak to me again for twenty-four hours. I can't stand you. Thank heaven, there is the train!"

Some hours later he found her sitting at the drawing-room window of the hotel looking down upon the most characteristic sight in Madrid—the afternoon procession of carriages.

From four o'clock until any hour of a fine night, while the national stew simmers on the back of the stove, the wealth and fashion, and those that would be or seem to be both, drive out the Calle de Alcalá to the great paseos and parks, and back through the narrow Carrera San Jerónimo in an unbroken line that bewilders the eye and creates the delusion of an endless and automatic chain. There are more private carriages in Madrid than in any city in the world, and in bright weather their owners would appear to live in them, indifferent to hunger or fatigue. Those who have Paris gowns exhibit them, those who have not hide their poverty under the always picturesque mantilla; but few are so poor as not to own a turnout. A woman of any degree of fashion in Madrid will sell her house, if necessary, her furniture, her jewels, and live in two rooms with one or no servant, but have her carriage and her daily drive she will; for to lose one's place in that distinguished chain would be to lose one's hold on the world itself. So long as they can see and be seen daily in the avenues they love, bow to the same familiar faces and criticize the gowns of friend and foe, the *olla podrida* can burn and the frock under the mantilla be darned and turned,

the daughters dowerless, and even theatre tickets unavailable. They have at least the best in life; and then there is always the long morning in bed and the bull-fight. And who would not envy a people so tenacious of the desirable and so bravely satisfied?

Catalina was at the window on the Carrera San Jerónimo, and there was no one else in the sala at the moment. Over approached in some trepidation, not having been spoken to since the final word on the slope of the Escorial; but Catalina, diverted by the bright birds of paradise on their homeward flight, looked up and smiled charmingly. She wore one of her white frocks and a string of pearls in her hair, and stirred the languid air with a large black fan. In a strong light she was always beautiful, and in the late sun-touched shadows of evening, with her pretty teeth showing between the red waving line of her lips, she looked very sweet and seductive.

"I suppose I ought to apologize," said Over, who had had no thought of apologizing.

"You did say very rude things, but I squared them by losing my temper. If we begin to apologize—" She shrugged her shoulders and lowered her lashes to the hats and mantillas below.

He took the chair before her. "Let us talk it out," he said. "What do you think? Is this close companionship of ours going to end in love, or are we the usual passing jests of propinquity? I admit I have never been so hard hit in my life; but at the same time I am not completely floored. Perhaps that is only because I am too contented in a way. If we were separated for a time, I fancy I'd know."

"Your sense of humor must have flown off with your national caution. I never before heard of a man asking a girl to straighten out his sentiments for him."

"I don't care a hang about traditions. If I love you I want to marry you, and if I don't I'd rather be shot. I am talking it out in cold blood when I can, and this unromantic spot, with all that infernal clatter down there, is

as good a place as any. Besides, I don't want you to think that I am not capable of being serious—of appreciating you. Life would be unthinkable happiness if we loved each other—"

"You take for granted that if you managed to reach the dizzy height, I should arrive by the same train." She spoke flippantly, but he saw that she had broken the sticks of her fan.

"I told you once before today that I believed every Jack had his Jill. If I loved you it would be for what you had in you for me alone—I know what the other thing means. You are as much in doubt as I am. As for myself, I perhaps would be sure if you were not so beautiful; but there are times when you blind, and I don't intend to make that particular kind of a silly ass of myself."

"Well," said Catalina rising, "I have a fancy we will find out in Granada—by moonlight in the Alhambra and all that sort of thing. One thing is positive—we are in the dark at present, and the conditions are not illuminating. Here comes Mrs. Rothe." As she moved off she turned suddenly. "If you should continue indefinitely in this painful state of vacillation," she said sweetly, "you may consider these two little conversations decently buried. For my part I like friendship, and we have become quite adept at that."

VIII

"THIS is Granada—Granada—Granada—and we are living in the Alhambra—somehow I always pictured the Alhambra as a mere palace, not as a whole military town where thousands lived; and to be actually domiciled in one of its old streets—its old, steep, narrow, crooked streets—I don't quite realize it, do you?"

"I shall feel more romantic when I have cleaned up—and someone has stolen my pipe."

"Oh, I hate you!" said Catalina, but she forgot him in a moment.

She had persuaded Mrs. Rothe to go to a *pension* instead of a hotel—she

had heard of one frequented mainly by artists—and with less difficulty than she had anticipated, for it was the season of traveling Americans, and her erring but sensitive chaperon was weary of being stared at. The front windows of the *pension* looked upon a street whose paving-stones and walls had echoed the tramp of Moorish feet for nearly a thousand years, and are still as eloquent of that indomitable race as if the Spanish conquerors had never passed under the Gate of Justice. In an angle at the back of the house was a garden with a long latticed window in its high wall, and beyond were the great shade trees of Alhambra Park. There was a sound of running water and the hum of drowsy insects, but it seemed as quiet as a necropolis after the long flight from the station behind the jingling mules into Granada, and the following drive over the rough streets of the city up to the heights of the Alhambra.

Catalina's room had windows on both street and garden, and she could look down into Over's room in the other side of the angle, on the floor below. The garden, although the kitchen opened upon it, was full of sweet-smelling flowers and rustic chairs, and at one end was a long table where a man sat painting. There were no palms here, for Granada is two thousand feet above the Mediterranean and the eternal snows are on the Sierras behind her.

"I suppose, then," said Catalina, after a half-hour's dreaming, "that you don't mind if I go for a walk without you?"

"Oh, do wait! I'm quite fit now."

"I'll meet you down in the street."

On her way through the quaint irregular house she met a tall fine-looking girl, who half smiled and bowed as if welcoming her to the *pension*. For a moment Catalina wondered if by any chance her family could have bought out the Spanish proprietors, but dismissed the thought. The girl was not only unmistakably American, but of the independent class. She wore a blue veil about the edge of her large hat, and her ashen

hair in a single deep curve on her forehead. Her white shirt-waist and white duck skirt were adjusted with a perfection of detail that suggested the habit of a maid or of time and concentrated thought. Her features were good, and in spite of a hint of selfishness and rigidity about the mouth, and a pair of rather cold gray eyes, her smile was very sweet. But her claim to distinction was in her grooming, her beauty, mien and in her subtle air of gracious patronage.

"She looks like a princess and yet not quite like a lady," thought Catalina. "What can she be?"

Over joined her, and as the two gray harmonious figures walked down the street, Catalina turned suddenly and looked at the *pension*. The girl in white was leaning from one of the upper windows. But this time the cool gray eyes had no message for one of her own sex. They dwelt upon the Englishman's military and distinguished back. Catalina thrilled to the vague music of unrest deep in some unexplored nook of her being. The second response was a snapping eye which she turned upon Over.

"I met an American girl as I was coming out that I have taken a dislike to," she announced. "She has a most absurd patronizing manner, and looks as if she were trying to be the great lady but couldn't quite make it. I prefer the Moultons, who are frankly suburban."

"I thought the Moultons very jolly—poor souls. I suppose they have reached the haven of an Atlantic liner by this."

"Did you see that girl?" asked Catalina sharply.

"What girl? Oh, in the *pension*, just now. I passed a rather stunning girl on the stairs—but there are so many girls! Shall we wander about outside a bit before getting the tickets?"

The great red towers of the Alhambra were before them, and Catalina forgot the Unknown. There happened to be no one else in the Plaza de los Aljibes as they entered

it, and the afternoon was very warm and still. They lingered between the hedges of myrtle, the flower-best beloved of the Moor, and disdaining the upstart palace of Charles V. looked wonderingly at the featureless wall that hid so much beauty, and in its time had secluded from the vulgar the daily life and gorgeous state of the most picturesque court in Europe; and such harems of varied loveliness as never will be seen again. Only the Tower of Comares rising sheer from the northern wall of the Assabica Hill is as visible from the plaza as from the courts, of whose life it was once a part.

"It was from that window that the Sultana Ayxa la Horra, the mother of Boabdil el Chico, let him down to the Darro with a rope made of shawls so that he could escape from Granada before his dreadful old father murdered him," volunteered Catalina. "But of course you have read all about it—there never was a more delicious book than 'The Conquest of Granada'."

"Never heard of it, and am densely ignorant of the whole thing. You will have to coach me, as usual."

"Then I suppose you don't know that we should have no Alhambra today—hardly one stone on another—if it hadn't been for Irving—an American! How do you like that?"

"You know I have no race jealousy, and I had just as lief it had been Irving as any other Johnny. What difference does it make, anyhow? We have the Alhambra. It's like bothering about who wrote Shakespeare's plays."

"That doesn't interest you?"

"Not a bit. The plays don't much, for that matter. I'm glad our literature has them, but all that sort of speculation seems to me a crying waste of time and mental energy. Let's have the lecture. What did you say your black's name was?"

"Black! Boabdil had beautiful golden hair and blue eyes." And she sketched the vacillating fate of that ill-starred young monarch while they sat on a bench opposite the great façade

of the Alcazaba, that once impregnable citadel swarming with turbaned Moors. To Catalina they were almost visible today, so vivid was her historical sense; and, as ever, she caught Over in the rush of her enthusiasm. He always invited these little disquisitions, less for the information, which he usually forgot, than for the pleasure of watching the changing glow on Catalina's so often immobile face. Moreover, she was invariably amiable when roaming through history. Her voice, in spite of its little Western accent, was soft and rich and lingered in his ear long after she had fallen into a silence which presented a contemptuous front to such masculine artfulness as he possessed.

Today, after they had passed through the little door of the Alcazaba, she fell abruptly from garrulity into a state of apparent dumbness; but Over walked contentedly beside her in the warm and fragrant silence of the ruin. Except for the ramparts and the two great watch towers where the Moor had contemplated for so many anxious months the vast army and glittering camp of Ferdinand and Isabella on the vega beyond Granada, and the sheer sides of the rock on which the fortress was built, there was little to suggest that it had once been the warlike guardian of the palace. It rather looked as if it had been the pleasure gardens of a pampered harem, with its winding walks between terraces of bright flowers, its fountains, overgrown, like the fragments of wall, with ivy, and its grottoes, always cool, and of a delicious fragrance; while from every point there was a glimpse of snow mountain or sunburnt plain.

After they had rambled in silence for an hour Catalina emerged from her centres and suggested that they go up to the platform of the Torre de la Vela. From that high point, famous for having been the first in Granada to fly the pennons of Aragon and Castile, they saw the perfect rim of hills and mountains that curve about the city and its vega. On the tremendous ridges and peaks of the Sierras, no less than on the blooming slopes of the lower ranges,

there once were watch towers and fortified towns, the outer rind of the pomegranate which the Spaniards stripped off bit by bit until they reached the luscious pith that so aptly symbolized the delights of the Moorish stronghold. The fortresses are gone, but the eternal snows still glitter, the Xenil is as silvery as of yore, while the sloping city of Granada itself presents an indescribably ancient appearance, with its millions of tiles, baked and faded by the centuries into a soft pinkish gray, its streets so narrow that one seems to look down upon a vast roof, from which crosses and towers rise like strange growths that mar the harmony of a scene otherwise perfect in line and delicate color. The solitary tower of the cathedral rises from the mass of roofs like a mere monument above the tombs of Ferdinand and Isabella; who, for all they lie in consecrated stone, have ever about them the phantom of the ancient mosque.

Above the roofs the very air was pink; and out on the shimmering vega to the western hills the sun was seeking to pay his evening visit. On the right, or north, of the Alhambra, across the river Darro, was the Albaicin on a steep mountain spur, once both sister and rival of the palace hill, "the whole surrounded by high walls three leagues in circuit, with twelve gates, and fortified by a thousand and thirty towers." It was, in general, faithful to Boabdil el Chico, Catalina informed her companion, thirsty for knowledge, and was the scene of terrific battles between that whim of destiny and his unrighteous old father, Muley Aben Hassan. Today it is given over to thousands of gypsies, who are faithful to nothing but their nefarious and oftentimes murderous instincts. But by far the most imposing objects in the extensive panorama, after the snow mountains, were the ruined towers of the Alhambra itself. Besides the three in the foreground, and Comares, of romantic memories, was a line in varying stages of picturesque decay, extending along the precipitous bluff overhanging the Darro. Between were gardens of glowing flowers,

narrow streets, ruined walls, wild patches of wood where the cliff-side jutted; and on the south side of the Alhambra hill, parallel with the Darro, the dense park of elms planted by the Duke of Wellington.

"There is the town of Santa Fé," said Catalina, pointing to a speck on the edge of the vega. "Ferdinand and Isabella caused it to be built when they were in camp. The articles of Granada's capitulation were signed there, and their contract with Columbus. Over there in the Sierras, somewhere, is the spot where Boabdil turned to take a last look at Granada, and was reproached by his mother—who was far more of a man than he was—for weeping like a woman for what he could not defend like a man. When I was a child my mother used to sing me to sleep with 'The Last Sigh of the Moor.'"

And she suddenly trilled forth with an abandonment of sorrow which startled Over more than any phase she had yet exhibited:

"*Ay, nunca, nunca, nunca mas veré!*"

"That means, 'Aye, never, never, never more to see,'" she translated practically. "How close it brings the island of Santa Catalina, undiscovered by the tourist then, and our lonely little inn! My mother always sang me to sleep in a big rocking-chair, and my father sat by a student-lamp and read, frowning until she had finished. It all seems a thousand years ago."

"Did you miss your parents much?" asked Over curiously.

For a second it seemed to him that he saw a window open in the depths of her eyes. Then she turned her back on him. "I don't live in the past," she said. "Let us go down into the park. It will be dusk in a few moments, and the nightingales will sing."

They lingered a while among the terraces watching the sun go down, then descended through the Gate of Justice into the park. There the steep aisles were dim, there was the murmur of running water, and in a few moments the nightingales burst forth into song.

Over and Catalina sat down on a grassy bank. There appeared to be no one in the park but themselves. The man looked up, half expecting to see turbaned heads and flashing eyes on the towers and ramparts above; or the glittering cavalcade of Ferdinand and Isabella crowding through the Gate of Justice; or the faithless wife of Boabdil stealing out to her fatal tryst with Hamet of the Abencerrages. In the warm duskiness of the wood under the watch towers and ramparts, and the fountain of Charles V. beside them, the music of nightingale and distant waters thrilling the soft voluptuous air, it was easy to imagine that the walls of Granada had yielded to neither the Spaniard nor to Time. They were the most romantic moments he had ever known; and the Alhambra is the most romantic ruin on earth, the one where the modern world seems but a bit of prophetic history, and four hundred years are as naught.

But there came a moment when he retraced his flight and stole a glance at Catalina. If she were as thrilled with the sense of his nearness as he with hers in these glades of teeming memories, she gave no sign. With her head thrown back and eyes half closed she appeared to be drinking in the delicious notes of the nightingales. She was quite as beautiful as any of the captive sultanas who had whiled away the hours for their fierce lords in the mysterious apartments above—and startlingly like. Such women, white of skin, dark and sphinx-like of eye, with delicate features and tender forms, were sought throughout the East to tempt the sated appetite of the Moorish tyrants. Just so had women with wistful, upturned profiles listened to the dulcet notes of the nightingale floating down from the trees beside Comares into the spacious courts beneath their narrow windows, dreaming of the lovers they would never see. How like she was! In looks, yes; but he laughed outright as his fancy pictured Catalina as even the reigning favorite of a harem where a mistaken monarch sought to filch her

of her liberty and bend her will. His abrupt half-conscious laughter rent the spell of the evening, and Catalina sprang to her feet.

"I forgot to ask the dinner hour," she said. "But it must be time. I am starved."

She walked rapidly up the hill, and Over followed, conscious that he had thrown away one of the exquisite moments of life, and hardly knowing, now that the intoxication had passed, whether he would have it so or not.

XIX

THEY found the guests of the *pension* at dinner in the garden. There were ten or twelve people at the table, and Over and Catalina were conscious of a conspicuous entrance; and a certain familiar lighting of the eye in those facing the door heralded them as a distinguished young couple on their honeymoon. Catalina, whose spirits had ebbed far out, frowned and took the vacant chair beside Mrs. Rothe, that at least she might not be obliged to talk to a man, and Over sat himself beside the husband. In a moment Catalina saw her mistake; there was but one person between her cavalier and the blond young woman who had inspired her with distrust.

The American girl sat at the head of the table with the air of a hostess entertaining her guests. She was perhaps twenty-six, but she had the aplomb of a woman who not only has been a gracious hostess for many years, but has exacted and received much tribute. She wore a thin black gown which became her fairness marvelously well, and had dressed her smooth, ashen hair both high and low. Her long back was straight without effort, and if her shoulders were a shade too broad, her waist and hips were less mature. Everybody else looked dowdy in comparison, even Mrs. Rothe suffering an eclipse.

But if her toilet was triumphant, her manner was more so. On one side of her sat a Frenchman, on the other

a Spaniard, opposite Captain Over a German, and she addressed each in his language, taking care that none should suffer at the expense of the other; and it was manifest that they all adored her. She was, in fact, a brilliant figure, and if her sweet smile was somewhat mechanical and her fine gray eyes keen and passionless, her swains were too dazzled by her manner and her handsome appearance to detect the flaws.

Catalina cocked her ears, but found neither wisdom nor cleverness in the remarks that fell from the thin, well-cut lips. It was the girl's linguistic accomplishment, her bright manner of saying nothing, and willingness to hear men talk, that were responsible for the delusion that she was a brilliant woman. Catalina's curiosity could no longer contain itself, and she turned abruptly to Mrs. Rothe and spoke for the first time.

"Who is she?" she asked. "Have you heard?"

"Her name is Holmes, and I heard her sister, that dowdy little artist over there, call her Edith."

"I wonder who—what—she is?"

"Nobody in particular, I should think."

"But she—she—dominates everything."

"That is the American girl—a certain type. You'll see a great many of them if you go about enough. This specimen was born with a respectable amount of good looks, a high opinion of herself and some magnetism. On her way through life she has acquired what some call *autorité*, others bluff. She probably has no position to speak of at home—she never would wear her hair in that Florodora lump on her forehead if she had—but she has made a great deal of running in Summer and winter resorts, and in Europe. The study of her life is twofold: dress and how to please men—while deluding them that they are graciously permitted to please her. Her knack for languages stands her in good stead, her tact is almost—never quite—perfect; for she too

often makes the mistake of snubbing women. She knows the value of every glance, she has a genius for small talk and dress—probably she has not an income of a hundred and fifty dollars a month, and her sister has to dress like a sweep to help her out—and I should be willing to stake all I have that she dances to perfection. She is the sort of girl that men delight to make a belle of, not only because she flatters them and is always 'all there,' but because she does them so much credit. But they usually are quite content to swell her train, and forget to propose. What she is on the lookout for, of course, is a rich husband, but every year she becomes more and more the veteran flirt, more polished and mechanical, and less seductive; and will end by taking anyone she can get."

"She is a type, then. I fancied her unique."

"Dear me! There are hundreds like her."

"All the same, I can't take my eyes off her. She fascinates me. I don't like her—but I think I'd like to be like her."

"Heaven forbid! She is a very second-rate person, my dear, and your beauty is real, while hers is only a matter of effect. She fascinates you because she is young and successful, and you see her like for the first time. But she is nothing in the world but a man's woman, and while as chaste as an Amazon—I suppose Amazons were chaste—has probably been engaged several times—the type is sentimental—I might add, experimental. I caught Lolly hanging over her this afternoon, and she will doubtless put him through his paces. It won't hurt him; she is not the type that men die for—not even what the French call an *allumense*—just a plain American flirt."

"She has style," sighed Catalina.

"Of a sort," said the New Yorker indifferently. Then she turned suddenly to Catalina with the charming sympathy of glance and manner that blinded her friends to the poor ruin

of her face. "How you could rout her if you would!" she said. "Don't you know, my dear, that the woman who receives that sort of promiscuous adulation is always the woman who wants it, who works for it? Given a decent amount of natural charm, and any determined woman can be a belle. But it means more work and self-repression, more patience with bores as well as with the wary, than you would ever give to it. And it means popularity with men and nothing more; no depth of accomplishment or interest in anything vital; and under that assumption of glorified independence she is really a slave, afraid to relax her vigilance lest she lose her hold, never daring to be absent-minded, or careless in her dress. Of all the girls I have ever known you have the least reason to envy anyone—so banish the cloud!"

Catalina glowed, and reminded herself of the opportunities thrust upon her to be the belle of a season that she had spurned with less than politeness; but in a moment her brows met and she lost her appetite. Over had been drawn into the magnetic current at the head of the table. Miss Holmes was leaning forward as if graciously permitting the stranger to enter, yet herself lured by the wisdom—it was a comment on the narrowness of Moorish streets—that flowed from his lips.

"What idiots men are!" thought Catalina viciously. "I suppose if I hung on his words like that he'd not hesitate a minute about being in love with me. But I'd like to see myself!"

XX

AFTER dinner Catalina went up to her room to brush her hair—her head ached slightly—and sit for a while by herself before the evening walk. As a rule, she was the first to be down, but tonight she had a perverse desire for Over to come or send for her. She was suddenly tired of meeting him halfway, of being the frank,

almost sexless, comrade; she wanted to be sought and made much of. Miss Holmes might be second-rate, but she was an artist, and Catalina was not above taking a leaf out of her book.

"I'd rather be a hermit and have smallpox than bother forever as she does, according to Mrs. Rothe; and flatter men—not I! But I think I should be more feminine and difficult."

Her hands trembled a little as she burnished her hair, and once her eyes filled with tears; but she brushed them off with a scowl, and still refused to think. She had been too much with Over, and their friendship had run too smoothly for her thoughts to have been tempted to revolve about him when alone. There were times when she turned cold and then hot if he came upon her suddenly, and his touch and glance had thrilled her more than once. But she had kept it steadily before her that this was but a summer friendship, and that in a short time she would be in California and he in England. It is true that her imagination supplemented the separation with a meeting in one country or the other not later than a year hence, but she had not permitted her mind to dwell upon the significance of his audible self-analysis in Madrid, holding that when a man doubted the depth of his sentiments the time had not come to take him seriously. Moreover, to speculate upon the significance of a man's attentions was not only indelicate but put her in the class with other girls, and nothing distressed her more than to approach the average. Therefore had she never sought to discover what lay beneath her daily pleasure in Over's society and her matter-of-fact assumption that for the time he was hers.

Nor would she permit herself to analyze her sense of disappointment tonight. Her soul had been floating on the high golden notes of the night-ingales, and not alone; it had plunged down with a velocity that left it sick and dizzy, but as Catalina banged the

large pins into her hair she still refused to demand the reason.

The people were talking in the garden. She shut her window overlooking it and sat down before the one opposite. The street was lit by a solitary lamp; the moon had not risen; it was full of dusky shadows. It was easy to convert the shadows into swarthy men with turbaned heads and flowing robes, but she was not in a historical mood. Even a man with a long Spanish cloak folded closely about him and holding manifestly to the heavier shadows failed to arrest her attention. In spite of her admirable self-control, her mind wondered uneasily why Over did not call her, how he was occupied; for the time was passing.

Her eyes wandered to the height behind the Albaicin. There were lights; they might be watch-fires. It was not so long ago that that turbulent quarter had rung with the clamor of battle, of civil strife, that its gates had been secretly opened to Boabdil in the night, and his father or uncle been defied to come over and redden its streets. What were four centuries?

"I shall always have that pleasure, that resource," thought Catalina arrogantly. "I can always take refuge in the past on a moment's notice. Where on earth can he be? Does he suppose I don't want to walk—as I haven't gone down? Or is he too interested——?"

Her spine stiffened. She listened intently, then stood up silently and looked down. Over and Miss Holmes were standing in the doorway of the *pension*, talking. Catalina could not distinguish the words. Over had a low voice of no great carrying power, and Miss Holmes had neglected none of the charms that man finds excellent in woman. But he was leaning to her words in a fashion that denoted interest, and oblivion of all else for the moment. In a flash Catalina realized just how attractive he was to women.

Still talking, they moved from the doorway into the street and then down in the direction of the palace. Cata-

lina leaned out with a gasp, hardly believing the evidence of her eyes. For a moment astonishment routed other sensations. Was it possible that Over was on his way to visit the Alhambra for the first time by moonlight with another woman?—that he was going for his evening walk at all without her? Never had he thought of doing such a thing before; they went off together, frequently alone, every evening. Even in Toledo he had come directly to the Casa Villéna after dinner, and sooner or later, by one device or another, had managed to carry her off for a stroll. But there he was, complacently walking down street with another woman, and not so much as a backward glance. And the other woman had white lace about her head and shoulders, and no doubt looked like a *loleí*. The only beauty she had ever heard Over praise was the beauty of fair women, which was as it should be. And Englishmen laughed at American distinctions. If this girl were second class, how was Over to find her out on a moonlight night in a tricky frame, how discover that she wore her hair like a shopgirl? Doubtless, if he thought at all about the matter, he would elevate Miss Holmes above herself in the social scale. She at least did not suggest the cowboy.

And still he did not turn his head. Perhaps he was only strolling for a few minutes with the new acquaintance, waiting for his usual companion to descend. Catalina leaned farther out. In a moment they passed the old mosque and disappeared.

She fell back from the window, unable for a moment to think coherently; the blood was pounding in her head. Her impulse was to run after them and twist her rival's neck. She panted with hate, with the desire for vengeance, with the lust to kill. She stood like a wooden idol, but she boiled with the worst passions of the ancient races behind her. She conceived swift plans of vengeance. She would make friends with the girl, poison her peace of mind, kill her if she could not inveigle her into killing herself. The malignant,

treacherous nature of the aboriginal controlled her, obsessed her. Civilization fell away; she was capable of the worst; she cared nothing for consequences. Literally, she wanted the enemy's scalp. Then, without premeditation, she wept stormily, like an undisciplined child—or a savage—beside itself. And then the obsession passed and she was horrified.

It was not thus her imagination had dwelt upon the great revelation. She had visioned love among the stars, and had expected—groping, perhaps—to find it there. But to discover it in a fit of jealous rage, writhing in the most ignoble of the passions, her soul shrieking for revenge—she descended to the depths of discouragement, humiliation. She doubted if she were worthy of being loved even by a mere man—for the moment she despised the entire sex for Over's weakness and inconstancy. Of course, like others, he had succumbed to this enchantress, who didn't even wear her hair like a lady, and was therefore unworthy of even the rage she had flung after him. She longed to despise him so hotly that her love would be reduced to a charred ember, and thought she had succeeded; then it flamed all through her, and she sprang to her feet.

"There is one thing I can do," she thought, and lit the candle. "I'll leave tomorrow. Never will I go through this again, and never will I see him again if I can help it."

She had the instinct of all wounded things, and a terror of the emotions that had torn her. Pain she could stand, and had a dim foreshadowing that in solitude she might attain that dignity of soul that sorrow and meditation bring to great natures, but never the passionate conflict of emotions that confused her now. As she locked her trunk there was a knock on her door. She answered mechanically, and Mrs. Rothe entered.

"What—?"

Catalina, who was sitting on the floor, sprang to her feet. Her hair was disordered and her eyes red. There was no use attempting to conceal anything

from this keen-eyed woman, whose sufferings were stamped in the loosened muscles of her face. She stood silent and haughty. She would deny nothing, but nothing was further from her mind than confession.

"May I sit down?" asked Mrs. Rothe. "Have you a headache? I was afraid you must have, as you did not come down."

"My head doesn't ache, but I am sick of Spain. I am going to start for home tomorrow."

"Oh, I am sorry. It will be dreary without you. And I thought it so enchanting here. Can't I induce you to change your mind?"

Catalina sat down on her trunk, but she shook her head. "I want to go home," she said.

Mrs. Rothe turned her kind, bitter eyes full upon Catalina. "Don't run away," she said. "It is unworthy of you. And this means nothing. What is more natural—he being a man—than that he should accept the minor offerings of the gods when the best is not forthcoming? Moreover, when a man has talked steadily to one girl for three weeks"—she shrugged her shoulders—"that is the way they are made, my dear, the way we are all made, for that matter, as you will discover in time for yourself. It is better to accept men as they are, and early than late."

"I never want to see another man again—and this was our first night in Granada. There was—had been for weeks—a tacit understanding that we should do every bit of it together—"

"But you disappeared. No doubt he thought you were indisposed—"

"I wanted him to come after me, for once."

"Oh, my dear, men are so dense. When they love us desperately they rarely do what we most long to have them. If I don't sympathize with you—well, I think of my own throes, not only at your age but so often after. It is so easy to fall in love, so difficult to remain there. You can marry Over if you wish—and two or three years hence—the pity of it!"

"Do you mean that no love lasts?"

"In tenacious natures like yours it may. Nevertheless, there will be times when he will bore you, get on your nerves, when you will plan to get away from him for a time. A few years ago I still clung—in the face of experience—to my delusions. Then I would have held your hand and wept sympathetic tears. Now, I can only say, go in and win, but don't break your heart over an imagined capacity for love at an interminable high pitch."

"You must have loved Mr. Rothe when you married him," said Catalina with curiosity, and feeling that Mrs. Rothe had opened the gates and bidden her enter.

"I did," said the older woman drily. "For what other reason, pray, would I make a fool of myself, and disgust and antagonize those whom I had loved so long? What a fool the world is!" she burst out. "And writers, for that matter! They are always harping on the death of the man's love, upon the punishment that will be visited upon the woman of mature years who marries a man younger than herself! I am capable of the profoundest feeling, and I have never been able really to love a man in my life. I have deluded myself again and again, and invariably the man has disappointed or disgusted me. This is my third husband. The first died, but not soon enough to leave me with a blessed memory. The second, whom I had found irresistible, developed into a gourmand with a bad temper. I lived with him for fifteen years. When I met Rothe I was forty, the beginning of the most critical period in the life of women of my sort—when if not happy we would stake our souls for happiness. It seemed to me that I could not continue to live without love, and yet that I could not die unless I had, if only for a day, loved to the full capacity of my nature. When I met Rothe and he fell head over heels in love with me—I was a very handsome woman five years ago—I was at first flattered; then his ardor struck fire in me and I made no effort to extinguish it. It was what I had waited

for, prayed for, and I encouraged it, fanned the flame. I was convinced that it was the grand passion at last; and I went out to Dakota. I gloried in the sacrifice, gloated over it. And in spite of divorce and scandal I suppose I was happy for a time."

"And now?" asked Catalina breathlessly. She had forgotten Over and Miss Holmes. Never had she been so close to living tragedy. Mrs. Rothe, in her negligée of pale yellow silk and much lace, her ruffled petticoat and slippers of the same shade, indescribably fresh and dainty, and, in the light of the solitary candle, a beautiful woman once more, was to Catalina the very embodiment of "the world"; and for the moment far more interesting than herself.

"Now! I hate the sight of him. I am bored beyond the power of words to tell. I have to remind myself that he is not my son, and when I do not long for my own son, who was far brighter, I long for a man of my own age to exchange ideas with, who will understand me in a degree. There are a few women with eternal youth in their souls, but I am not one of them. I am tired of all his little habits; the very expression of his face when he smokes a cigarette with his after-dinner coffee gets on my nerves. I am sick of making up and pretending to be interested in the things that interest a young man. I want to be frankly myself—of course, I should hate growing old in any case, but I am sick of being a slave—that is what it amounts to when you don't dare to be yourself. But I must keep up the farce lest I lose him, and the world laugh and once more remind itself of its perspicacity. I give him a long rope, he is still fond of me, my pride mounts as everything else fades away. There you are!"

Catalina had hardly drawn breath during this jeremiad. She no longer had any desire to run from her own pain. After all, what had Over done but take a walk with a strange girl in her own absence? She had beaten a molehill as high as a mountain. But she could think of nothing to say. In

the bitter misery before her there was the accent of finality, and comment would have been resented if heard.

"I have told you all this," said Mrs. Rothe, "partly because the impulse after five years of repression was irresistible, partly to show you that the great tragedy of a woman's life is when not the man, but she, ceases to love. Better far death and desolation, and a great memory, than a nature in ruins, and the magic that would rebuild gone out of hope forever. As for you—congratulate yourself that you are able to feel and suffer as you have done to-night. Over is a better sort than most. Marry him and prove that you are of greater and finer stuff than I. I should be delighted. And if this girl should develop into a rival of a sort, welcome the stimulation, and show your mettle—"

"I won't fight over any man!"

"Certainly not. Simply be more charming than she is. Nothing could be easier. You could not make the mistake of eagerness if you tried, but you can be obviously delightful—and you know him far better than she does, and have no machine-made methods. Now go to bed and sleep, and ignore the episode in the morning. You went to bed with a headache and neither knew nor cared what Over did with himself."

XXI

Thus it came about that the next morning not long after dawn Catalina was leaning out of her garden window humming a Spanish air when Over pushed aside his curtain and looked up expectantly.

"Coffee?" he whispered. She nodded. He pointed down to a little table in the window in the wall. They stole like conspirators through the dark house and down to the garden. Over was first at the tryst, and never had he greeted her with such effusion. He held her hand a moment and gazed solicitously into her eyes with an entire absence of humor as he tenderly demanded if she had been ill or only

tired the night before and assured her of his disappointment in being cheated of their walk. His conscience hurt him and he felt the more penitent as he saw that disapproval in any of its varied manifestations was not to be his portion. For Catalina looked nothing short of angelic. Her eyes were a trifle heavy, as if with pain, but her beautiful mouth curled and wreathed with sweetness. She wore for the first time a white blouse and a duck skirt, and about her throat she had knotted a scarlet ribbon. The fine soft masses of her hair looked as if spread with a golden net that caught the fire of the mounting sun; and she looked several years younger, fresher, more ingenuous than Miss Holmes, though older than herself.

She ground the coffee while he boiled the water, and when he alluded with an enthusiasm that was almost sentimental to their first coffee-making in Tarragona, recalling the solitary palm against the blue sea, her face lit up and her lips parted. So, all in a night, had their attitude of almost excessive naturalness toward each other dissolved into the historic duel of the man and the maid. Both were acutely sensible of the change, yet neither resented it, for it heralded the new chapter and its unfolded mysteries. Catalina had the advantage, for she understood and he did not; he only felt the subtle change, and the conviction that she was even more provocative than during the episode of the mantilla.

"No one in the world can make such good coffee," she said politely, as she sipped hers and looked through the bars at the dark arbors of the park. "I still had rather a headache when I awoke, but this is all I need. Did you go for a walk last night?"

She held her breath, but he replied promptly: "I walked round a bit with Miss Holmes—that fair girl who sat at the head of the table. But the moon rises late and there was nothing to see. I was in bed by ten o'clock. I hope you will be quite fit tonight so that we can see the Alhambra by moonlight together. I am very keen on that."

"So am I," and she gave him an enchanting smile, but without a trace of self-consciousness. "How do you find Miss Holmes? I long to meet her. She attracts me very much."

"Oh, she is very jolly—can talk about anything and has the knack of your race and sex for putting a fellow quite at his ease. You are certain to like her. She has given up her home life and wanders about Europe for the sake of her sister, who is an artist; has a deuced fine nature, I should say. What?"

"Nothing. Shall we take a walk? We can't get the cards for the palace for an hour or two yet."

"I hoped you would feel like a jolly long walk this morning. We really had no exercise yesterday, and after that ride from Madrid I feel as if I'd like to be on my legs for a week."

They walked for two hours along one of the country roads behind the Alhambra, racing occasionally, glimpsing many beautiful vistas, lingering for a while before the Generalife, the summer palace of the Moorish kings; Catalina gloating over the profusion and variety of the flowers, not only in the famous garden but cropping out of every crevice of the walls themselves. As they sat in the warm sunshine of one of the terraces she gave him another little lecture on the history of Granada in a curiously exultant voice that made him oblivious of the useful information she imparted. Never had he been so attractive to her as in this new role of the mere man endeavoring to propitiate his goddess, and happiness bubbled and sparkled within her; if by chance their eyes met her lashes played havoc with the expression of hers. She radiantly felt that he belonged to her, she obliterated the future, and forgot the seductress. She informed Over that it was Granada, Spain, the golden morning, that made her happy, and was careful to remove any impression he might harbor that she was making an effort to please him; for pride and a diabolical cunning stood her in the stead of experience. She merely had put her moody undis-

ciplined side to rest and exhibited in high relief her luminous exultant girlhood; and Over stared and said little.

But she was determined that if he did address her it should not be in direct sequence to her wiles, for she had a passionate wish to be sought, to be pursued. She would continue to dazzle him with the jewels of her nature and make him forget the weeds and clay that had inspired him with uneasiness, but she would go no further.

"Come!" she exclaimed, springing to her feet. "We can get into the Alhambra now, and I simply cannot wait any longer."

"Do you know," she said, as they walked down the hill toward the fortress, "I have had an uneasy sense of being watched ever since I came here? I was conscious of it several times while we were exploring yesterday, and last night as I sat by my window for a few moments before I went to bed"—she stammered, caught her breath and went on—"I felt it again; and in the night I woke up and heard two men talking under my window. I suppose there was nothing remarkable in that, but they stood there a long time, and one of the voices, although it was pitched very low, sounded dimly familiar. This morning, just before we reached the highroad I had again the sense of being watched—I am very sensitive to a powerful gaze."

Over, who was probably afraid of nothing under the sun, was looking at her in alarm. "You know I have always said that you must not go out alone in Spain," he said authoritatively. "And there is danger quite aside from your beauty. Not only are all Americans supposed by the ignorant rapacious lower classes of Europe to be phenomenally wealthy, but Californians in particular. And doubtless California is a legend with the Spaniard. I am not given to melodrama, but there is a desperate lot over in the Albaicin."

"I don't see what could happen to me in broad daylight, and certainly

I am not going to run after you or 'Lolly' every time I want to go out. What a bore!"

"Not for me. I wish you would promise——"

"Well, I'll be careful," she said lightly. "I have no desire for adventures of that sort. They must be horribly dirty over in the Albaicin, and after our experience with Spanish banks it might be some time before I could be ransomed."

Thé Albaicin might be dirty and abandoned to wickedness, but they decided, as they leaned over the parapet of the Plaza de los Aljibes before entering the palace, there was no doubt of its picturesqueness. Far beneath them sparkled the Darro, and beyond it, parallel with the Alhambra Hill, rising from the plain almost to the very top of the steep mountain spur, was another vast roof of pinkish gray tiles. But here they could distinguish one or two narrow streets, mere cuts in a bed of rock from their perch, and high balconies full of flowers between the Moorish arches, a glimpse of bright interiors, the towers and patios of a great convent where the nuns walked among the orange trees and the pomegranates, the roses and geraniums. Not a sound rose from the ancient city; it might have been as dead as the turbulent race that made its history. It lay steeping, swimming, in the pink light that seemed to rise like a vapor from its roofs. It looked like some huge stone tablet of antiquity, with hieroglyphics raised that the blind might read.

"I shall come and look at this in every light," said Catalina; "so if I disappear you will know where to find me."

They entered the palace through the little door in the noncommittal wall, and after bribing the guide to let them alone, lingered for a time in the Court of Myrtles, where the orange trees no longer grow beside the pool, but where the arcades and overhanging gallery are as graceful as when the court was the centre of life of the Comares Palace, first in this group

of palaces. Then, through an arcade that abutted into a fairy-like pavilion, they entered the Court of Lions.

Probably the Alhambra is the one ruin in the world where the most ardent expectations are gratified. From a reasonable distance the restored arabesque patterns on the walls, like Oriental carpets of many colors, and raised in stucco, present the illusion of originals; and all else, except the tiles gaudy in the primal colors, on the many roofs which project over the arcades into the courts, and the marble floors, are as the Africans left it. The twelve hideous lions upholding the double fountain in the famous court must have been designed by artists that had never penetrated the African jungle, nor visited a menagerie, and, as the only ugly objects amid so much light and graceful beauty, serve as an accent rather than a blot. Upholding the arches of the arcades that surround the court are a hundred and twenty-four pillars so light and slender, so mellowed by time, that they look far more like old ivory than marble. Above the arches the multi-cellular carving again looks like old ivory, and through them are seen the gay convolutions of the arabesques on the walls of the corridor. Above the cluster of shafts at the eastern end, which forms one of the two pavilions, the florid roofs multiply and rise to a dome of all the colors. Overhanging the north side of the court—in the second story—is a long line of low windows. They once gave light and glimpses of history to the captives of the king's harem.

"You must half close your eyes and imagine silken curtains waving between those slender pillars, which were meant to simulate tent-poles," said Catalina. "And Oriental rugs and divans in those arcades, and the lounging gentlemen of the court, and turbaned soldiers keeping guard, and women eternally peeping through the jalousies above. They must have seen this court red a thousand times: Muley Aben Hassan had two of his sons beheaded by this very fountain

to please a new sultana; and when they weren't beheading under orders they were flying into passions and killing one another. And the women could look straight into that room over there where Boabdil had the Abencerrages killed because one of them, as I told you, fell in love with his sultana. Do you see it all?"

"I confess I don't," said Over, laughing. "But I see quite enough—too much would make me apprehensive. How would you have liked that life?" he asked curiously as they crossed to the Hall of the Abencerrages. "I mean to have been the sultana of the moment, of course; not one of those captives up there."

"I should probably have been nothing but devil," replied Catalina drily. "It would have given me some pleasure to stick a knife into Muley Aben Hassan, and to have applied a sharp stick to Boabdil."

They stood for a few moments in the lofty room with its domed ceiling like a cave of stalactites, its fountain and ugly brown stains, and then Catalina shuddered and ran out.

"I can stand courts where murder has been done," she said, "for the sky always seems to clean things up. But that room is full of a sinister atmosphere. I should commit murder myself if I stayed in it too long."

The impression vanished and she moved her head slowly on the long column of her throat, smiling with her eyes, which met Over's.

"I hate ugly fancies and atmospheres," she said softly. "And the rest of the palace looks like a pleasure house; only I wish there were furniture and curtains—it seems to me they could be reproduced as successfully as the arabesques and roofs. Now one receives the impression that they slept and sat on the floor."

They were entering the Room of the Two Sisters, opposite the Hall of the Abencerrages, once the chief room of the sultana's winter suite. There are two slabs of marble in the floor that look like recumbent tombstones. What their original purpose was leg-

end sayeth not, unless it was to give an easy designation to a room which needs no such trivial spur to the memory. For the ceiling of this great apartment is one of the curiosities of the world. The dome is like a vast beehive, its five thousand cells wrought with the very colors of the flowers from which the ambitious builders brought their honey sweets. It might be a sort of Moorish heaven for the souls of bees, those tiny amazons who alone have demonstrated the superiority of the female over the male.

Catalina mentioned this conceit, and Over laughed grimly.

"When women are willing to do all the work—" he began, and then lifted his hat. Miss Holmes entered the room from the sala beyond.

She came forward with a smile of welcome, her manner quite that of a châtelaine welcoming the stranger to the halls of her ancestors.

"I am so glad I happen to be here," she said. "I know you are people whom guides only bore. I have lived in the Alhambra three weeks now, and am thinking of offering my services at the office; but you may have them for nothing." She included Catalina in her smiling gaze. "I hope your headache is better," she added politely.

"Yes, thank you," replied Catalina, who longed to scratch her. She reminded herself of her new role, however, and gave her a dazzling smile that filled her eyes with warmth and accented the gray coldness of the orbs, which, like her own, faced Over. "How I envy you for having been here three weeks!" she said. "I feel as if I couldn't wait to know, to be familiar with it all. Do you live in Spain?"

"If you call boarding in *pensions* frequented by artists of all the nationalities, living in a country, I have been here a year."

She piloted them through the rooms, reciting the information that lies in Baedeker, adroitly compelled by Catalina's intelligent questions to address the lecture to her. By the time they reached the queen's boudoir in the Tor-

re del Peinador, Catalina noted that the guide chafed visibly at being compelled to ignore the man, and it was evident by her wandering glances and the inflections of her voice that she not only admired the Englishman's good looks but appreciated his social superiority over the gentlemen of the brush who so often were her portion at *pensions*. Here, however, it was obviously the woman who would be interested in the perforated stone slab in a corner of the floor, which may have been built to perfume a queen or merely to warm her, and as she and Catalina disputed amiably, Over leaned on the stone wall of the narrow balcony and looked at the splendid view of Albaicin and mountain.

Then Catalina whimsically determined to give the girl the opportunity she craved. Her interest in the conversation perceptibly waning, Miss Holmes was enabled to transfer her attentions to the man, and, with battery of eye and glance, convey to him her pleasure in dropping history for human nature. When his attention was absorbed Catalina descended softly into the long arcade which overhangs the Darro, and, after wandering about at its extremity for a few moments and getting her bearings, sat down on the window-seat that looks upon the Patio de la Reja, with its neglected fountain and cypresses. They must pass her on their way to the Sala de los Embajadores. She was not sorry to be alone, and felt happy and secure, experiencing a passing moment of contempt for men in general, so easy were they to manage—a mood which assails every charming woman at times, and even on the heels of doubt and despair. But Catalina's spirit was too buoyant not to comprehend ideality in its flight, and she stared unseeingly at the dead walls and saw only what she had divined in Over.

She waited a long while. Coming out of her reverie with a start, she wondered how long it was and drew out her watch. It was half-past eleven, and, making a rapid calculation, she was driven to conclude that her cavalier

had been absorbed by the enchantress for fully an hour.

She was too proud to go after them, but her fingers curved round the window-seat in the effort to restrain herself, and her spirits plunged into an abyss of dull despair, emerging only on jealous and torturing wings to drop again. She realized the mistake she had made in the exuberance of her happy self-confidence; for a girl like Miss Holmes can make heavy running in an hour. On the steamer and in the various *pensions* where the Moultons had lingered she had often seen what no doubt was this same type of girl retire into a corner with the man she had marked for her own and talk—or listen—hour after hour; and Catalina had speculated upon their subjects, wondering that one human being could interest another for so long a time without the exterior aids of travel. The man had always looked as engrossed as the girl, and Catalina was forced to conclude that the mysterious arts were effective, and wished it were not forbidden to listen behind a curtain; but only that curiosity might be satisfied—she scorned arts herself. Now she wondered distractedly what this ashen-haired houri was talking about to make Over forget his very manners; but none of the long desultory conversations, followed by the longer silences peculiar to her experience with him, threw light on the weapons of this accomplished ruler of hearts; although the bare idea that they might be leaning over the parapet side by side in a familiar silence brought Catalina to her feet and turned her sharply toward the arcade. But at that moment she saw them coming.

Over was a little ahead of his companion, who was smiling with her lips, and he came forward with some anxiety in his eyes.

"I only just missed you," he said. "I thought you were there in the room lost in one of your silent moods. When did you come down?"

"Only a little while ago," said Catalina sweetly, and she saw the eyes of the other girl flash with something like

fear. She also noted that her cheeks were flushed.

"You have got a little sunburnt," she said, with concern for a fine complexion in her voice. "It is much cooler down here. Have we time to go into the Sala de los Embajadores?"

And Over was made subtly aware of the second-rate quality of Miss Holmes's accent.

They entered the immense room, whose dome is like a mighty jewel hollowed and carved within, where Boabdil drew his last breath as King of Granada; and before Miss Holmes could open her lips, Catalina, with all the picturesqueness of vocabulary she could command at will, described several of the scenes of which this most historical room in the Alhambra was the theatre; not only throwing into low relief the academic meagerness of the other girl's knowledge, but insinuating its supererogation. Meanwhile, she missed nothing. She saw the girl's color fade, her expression of almost supercilious self-confidence give place to anxiety, and as she turned away and stared out of one of the deep windows, it rushed over Catalina sickeningly that Over, in the span of an hour, had captivated her heart as well as her fancy. He must have made himself very fascinating! Catalina bungled her centuries; Miss Holmes in love would make a formidable rival.

The girl turned suddenly with mouth wholly supercilious and the light of war in her eyes. Catalina's face was as impassive as a mask. Miss Holmes walked deliberately toward Over, her mouth relaxing and humor in her eye, but Catalina was too quick for her. She might be an infant in the eyes of this accomplished flirt, but she had imagination and a brain capable under stress of abnormal rapidity of action. She had pulled out her watch and was facing Over.

"The palace closes at twelve—for the morning," she said, without a quiver of nervousness in her voice. "It wants but a few minutes of twelve, and we never care for luncheon until one. Would you care to go down and make

the usual futile attempt at the *poste restante*—or are you tired?"

"Tired? Let us go, by all means. I have had exactly one letter since I arrived in Spain. There surely is a batch here."

"I expect rather important ones." She turned to Miss Holmes. "Good morning," she said gaily. "And thank you so much. We are the hungriest people in the world for knowledge." And she marshaled the unconscious Over out, he lifting his hat mechanically to Miss Holmes, while admiring the sparkle in Catalina's eyes and the unusual color in her cheeks.

XXII

As they walked down the Empeadrada, the most shadowy of the avenues in the park, Catalina's ungloved hand came in contact with Over's and was instantly imprisoned. For a moment she lost herself in the warm magnetism of that contact, wondering somewhat, but filled with a new sense of pleasure. But as she turned her head and met his steady gaze, half humorous, half tender, she made her obedient eyes dance with mischief.

"Beware of the Alhambra," she said lightly.

"I am not afraid of the Alhambra," and although she turned her hand he held it fast.

"Aren't you?"

"You are very provocative."

She longed for the mantilla which had given her such confidence in Toledo; but swept him a glance from the veiled splendor of her eyes.

"I don't know whether I mind having my hand held or not."

But if this were diplomacy it failed; he tightened his clasp.

"I am not sure that I know you."

"I have heard you say that a good many times. You are not very original."

"I was thinking of today, particularly."

"Why today?" The wondering expression held her eyes. "I have never

felt more natural, nor happy. I feel as if the mere blood in my veins had turned to that golden mist we saw on the vega this morning. I adore Spain!"

She spoke the last words in such a passion of relief that he brought his face closer to hers.

"I believe I'd give my soul to kiss you," he whispered. There was no humor in his eyes, and he looked the born lover; and the glades of the "sacred grove" looked the very bower of lovers. But Catalina's moment of response was over. Humiliated and furious with herself she vowed on the spot that she would never again lift an eyelash to fascinate him. Love seemed lying in the dust, rocked back and forth by her experimental foot. He should come to her of his own free will, or go whence he came—with Miss Holmes, if he chose. She would be loved and wooed ideally, or die an old maid. But to bait—to manœuvre—to cross swords with a rival! For the moment she hated Over, and he might have departed on the instant with her blessing.

She had snatched away her hand and was almost running down the hill. He made no effort to recover her until they reached the Gate of Granada, and then they walked sedately down the white hot street together.

"Miss Holmes, it seems, has arranged rather a jolly affair for tonight," he said. "A dance in the Alhambra—in the Court of Lions. She has permission from the authorities, and has engaged some musicians. The moon rises at ten, and we will dance for two or three hours. How do you like the idea?"

"Well enough. I am not over-fond of dancing."

"I am sorry. I hoped you would give me the first waltz."

"Well, I will if I dance. But dancing is not my forte, and I hate doing anything I don't do well. I suppose you don't dance any better yourself, though. Englishmen never do."

"Indeed? How many Englishmen have you danced with?"

"Well, I have heard they don't."

"I flatter myself I dance rather well. It would be more like you to judge for yourself."

"I'll see."

They reached the post-office after a hot walk through the town, there to meet with the usual official stupidity, or indifference, at the window of the *poste restante*. In vain Catalina adjured the somnolent person leaning on his elbows to look carefully through the R's and S's and O's. He replied that there was nothing, but that there might be on the morrow; the manager of the *pension* had already spoken to him.

They left the post-office with bristling tempers.

"It is a relief to hate something in Spain!" cried Catalina. "And I hate the post, the telegraph and the banks. There is a cab. I have had enough of walking for one day."

XXIII

AFTER luncheon Miss Holmes put her arm through Catalina's. "Come into my room and talk to me a little while," she murmured. "I am so tired of all these men."

Catalina had stiffened at the contact, but pride made her yield at once. She turned with a smile in her eyes, and the other girl exclaimed impulsively: "You are the most beautiful thing I ever saw in my life!"

"Oh!" said Catalina, melting, but it was characteristic that she merely accepted the tribute as her due, and did not return it in kind.

The two girls presented an edifying spectacle for the eyes of puzzled man as they walked off, arm in arm; moreover, at the finish of an hour's chat in Miss Holmes's cool little room they were very good friends, for women may hate each other as rivals but like each other as human creatures of the same sex. They have so many feminine interests in common that man often dips over the horizon of memory while the mind is alive with the small and normal, only to resume his sway when it is vacant again.

Miss Holmes, sitting on the floor, her hands clasped about her knees, proved to be much like any other girl, and entertained Catalina with lively anecdotes of experience in Europe. Unconsciously she revealed much that evoked Catalina's sympathies. She made her own clothes, and it was evident that her life was harried by small economies whose names Catalina barely knew. She was a piece of respectable driftwood in Europe anchored to a still more respectable sister, and the more remarkable that she still was able to suggest a young woman of the leisure class.

"Of course I must marry," she said, shrugging her shoulders. "Unfortunately the only man I ever wanted to marry is a prince without a cent—you meet scions of all the nobility in *pensions*; but that of course means that they are as poor as you are. I suppose that you—independent as you are—won't marry for ages?"

"I have no intention of marrying at present," replied Catalina, without the flicker of an eyelash.

"Lucky you! I haven't either, for that matter, although my prince threatens to descend upon me; and if he does—" She lifted her shoulders again. "Women are idiots when they fall in love. Marriages ought to be made by the State according to fitness. How do you like my scheme for tonight?" she added abruptly.

"It is a stroke of genius. Fancy having a dance in the Alhambra by moonlight to carry away as a memory! Are you fond of dancing?"

"I adore it! It is the one thing I can do to perfection. I have actually been proposed to half a dozen times on the strength of my dancing."

Catalina turned cold. "What an odd reason for proposing! A man cannot dance with his wife."

"Well, you see, a man's head sometimes swims with his feet. Given a man who is fond of dancing and he is apt to think a woman perfection who dances to perfection."

Catalina rose abruptly. "I must go upstairs and rest for tonight. I

have been on the go since daybreak. Thank you for asking me to your pretty room," she added, with the charming courtesy she had at command. "You have what the French call the gift of installation, and this looks as if you had always lived here. I can't even keep my room tidy."

"You have always had servants to keep it tidy for you," said the other, with her quick, sweet smile. She shook Catalina's hand warmly. "Come in often," she said, and there was no doubting her sincerity. "And put on your most becoming gown tonight. It will be a pleasure to look at you."

But although she was attracted to Catalina and admired her beauty with the eye of the connoisseur, she had made up her mind to marry Over. Her love for the worthy but impoverished prince who had followed her about Europe for half a year was a fiction of the moment, but Over had carried her off her feet. She had met scions of the continental aristocracies by the score, but it was her first adventure with an Englishman of the higher class who looked as if he would love with difficulty and make love with ardor. She had held his attention during the morning immediately in the wake of many sensations quickened by Catalina, and it is possible that some of their exuberance may have overflowed to her. She recalled that his eyes had sparkled and melted and dwelt ardently upon her own, that his tones had been laden with meaning more than once, that he had uttered many spontaneously complimentary things. She looked upon Catalina as a lovely and somewhat clever child who could have no chance in the ring with herself, but she had taken pains to make certain that her young affections were not involved. She might have hesitated before breaking an engagement. It must be added that she cared not at all if Over were rich or poor. An English aristocrat, handsome, charming, a guardsman—her heart ached with the romance of it.

XXIV

AFTER supper they sat about the table in the garden until nine o'clock, the men and several of the women smoking; and there was much talk of art, of books, of travel, gossip of the studios, of politics. Until the day before it had been a party grown intimate through the association of several weeks, and tonight, at this, their third meal, the three Americans and the Englishman glided insensibly into the circle. It was a new society for all of them, and they were interested according to their respective bias.

Rothe was somewhat surprised to find that untidy artists could yet be gentlemen, not to say men. His wife felt a sympathetic interest in the individual and wondered if all these nice people were very poor and what their particular form of poverty was like; she had never come across artists in her charities. She longed vaguely to help them in some way without giving offense. And then she envied them their illusions, their faith, their enthusiasm, and wondered if the fount of eternal youth from which these endowments flowed washed from apprehension the everlasting pettiness of mortal life. Over was always interested when he was not bored, and Catalina pulsed with curiosity and thanked heaven anew for her deliverance from the Moultons. She had spent the afternoon reading to Mrs. Rothe, then had taken a nap, ignoring Over's existence.

But she sat opposite him at the table and looked very pretty in the candle-light, her arms extended, her hands clasped, her lithe body erect, her attitude one of absolute repose; the eyes, only, smiled occasionally above the serenity of the rest of her face. Once both she and Over became conscious that they had drifted from the conversation and were listening to the nightingales singing in the park beyond the wall. He met her eyes with a flash in his own, but she flashed defiance in response, and turned her attention to the German artist who

was disputing hotly with the Frenchman, pounding the table and apoplectic with excitement. Miss Holmes with her admirable skill calmed the raging waters and scattered them into various channels. She was in white tonight, with a black silk scarf about her shoulders and one end over her abundant fair hair; and the eyes of her devotees rarely left her face. The prince actually had arrived in the afternoon, and occupied the place of honor beside her, although she had contrived that Over should sit on her left; and she had played them against each other—or thought she had—throughout the evening.

The prince was a thick-set, melancholy-looking man of middle years who had some reputation for historical research, a position of solid respectability wherever he went, and a turn for severe economy. His inconsiderable power to add to the gaiety of the world was further depressed by the sense of his folly in falling in love with a penniless girl, but he glowered across at Over and resolved anew to win her if they had to rusticate on his meager estate for the rest of their lives. She was the only woman who had ever lifted the weight from his spirit, made him forget for a moment the contemptible condition into which, through no fault of his, his ancient family had fallen. If it had not been for this condition it is possible that he might long since have turned his back on the temptation of the American girl, for he held republics in such scorn that he would not have hesitated to break faith with the citizen of an illegitimate nation, as one wholly outside his code of honor and inherited sense of conduct. But this girl had brought sweetness into his life and he was grateful to her, and in his manner loved her.

She had considered him in her clear-eyed fashion, had pictured herself as his companion, well loved, no doubt, and with the entrée to the best intellectual society on the continent; but she knew him to be far more selfish than any man she had ever met, and

with a pride which, no matter how he might love and admire her, would never permit him to forget that he was a prince and she a plebeian; it is only just to add that she might have belonged to the flower of American aristocracy and he would have made no distinction. It was always a risk for an American woman to marry a European aristocrat with his uncontrollable sense of social superiority, not only over the inhabitants of the United States of America, but over those of every other nation but his own; and to marry one who took life seriously and was as poor as a church mouse was nothing short of foolhardy. But a prince was a prince, even if he were not the head of his family, and to become an indisputable princess was a great temptation to the self-made American girl—had been until she met Over. Now she would have sacrificed a prince of the blood with a malachite mine in Russia.

She had made herself very charming to Over throughout the evening, drawing him out, showing him to the others at his best, and he had been somewhat stimulated by the dull glow in the black opaque eyes opposite. As they separated to dress for the party he asked Catalina once more to give him the initial dance, and when she refused, positively, he immediately and eagerly asked the same favor of Miss Holmes. After a moment's sprightly thought and hesitation he was gratified.

Like most Englishmen of his class, he was fond of dancing, although he regarded it as a sort of poetical exercise, and on the whole preferred golf; and one good dancer was much the same to him as another. He was far too practical to feel any desire to hold a particular girl in his arms in a public room where other men held other girls in conventional embrace; but this Catalina could not know, and ran up to her room angry and hurt.

Nevertheless she dressed herself with elaborate care in an evening gown recently made in Paris, a white chiffon spangled with gold. It revealed the

slim roundness of her neck and arms and clasped her beautiful figure like mere drapery on a statue. She put a white rose on either side of the mass of hair she always wore low on her neck and found a long scarf of golden tissue to protect her when the night grew chill.

When she joined the others in the sala there was a murmur of admiration, rising high among the artists, which she received with absolute stolidity. Over came forward at once.

"What next?" he murmured. "You surpass my expectations. I can say no more than that. But you must put that scarf about your shoulders directly you go out or you will take cold."

"Practical Englishman! I never had a cold in my life."

"Wonderful young person! Put it on at once. We are starting."

Miss Holmes in pale green, looked like a lorelei with an American education. Her sister was draped in sage green, and the other artist of her sex in red and yellow Spanish shawls. Mrs. Rothe wore an elaborate blue gown with an air of doing the occasion all the honor possible. Over, Rothe and the prince wore the conventional evening dress; the foreign artists were in their velvet jackets, with the one exception of the German, who had got himself up in the property costume of a Spanish grandee.

Miss Holmes draped a white lace shawl about her head and shoulders. "Come!" she said. "It is time to start." And she led the way down the dark street with her prince. She was to dance many times with Over, and amiably gave the brief interval to the admirer who was much too serious for even the stately quadrille.

Over and Catalina brought up in the rear. She drew close to him with a little shiver.

"I still have that sense of being watched," she said. "I can't understand why I should be so silly as to notice it. I am usually afraid of nothing—never had a nerve before." But

she did understand, and resented. Over had roused and quickened all her femininity, and she longed for his protection, wondered at her former boy-like indifference to sympathy as to peril.

Over drew her hand through his arm. "It may be nothing and it may mean a good deal. Mind you do not wander off by yourself in the palace. If you do I shall be hunting for you, and that will spoil my evening. This dance has upset our plans, but we must have a stroll together through some of those old courts and corridors before the party breaks up."

XXV

THE moon hung directly over the tower of Comares. In the arcade beside the Room of the Two Sisters was a mass of bright cushions and an Oriental carpet. Here Mrs. Rothe enthroned herself, and the melancholy and disgusted prince kept her company. The musicians fiddled and strummed in the pavilion at the top of the court. Wind was rising in the trees on the steep hillside above the Darro, and the nightingales sang. The great rooms around the court, the low chambers above, were black with shadow, but the open spaces about the lions were lively with whirling figures and the chatter of women. The original party, which was too rich in men, had been reinforced by several American girls from another *pension*, and all had entered into the gay spirit of the night except Catalina, who stood alone in the pavilion opposite the musicians, frankly miserable, and furious with herself for daring to suffer.

Over had danced no less than six times with Miss Holmes, whose dancing would throw a Hebe out of court. She was the triumphant belle of the evening—no sultana in her little hour had ever held prouder sway in these halls of the Moors; and where they, indeed, had been glad of one doubtfully devoted heart she was lightly spurning half a dozen. The men importuned her be-

tween dances, the foreigners extravagant in their admiration, Over consoling himself with manifest discontent when she gave her hand to another.

He had just completed his sixth waltz with her when Catalina had her inspiration. He had not looked at her since the dancing began. There was only one way in which she could compel his attention, and although her shyness rose to arms, her knees shook and her breath came short, she set her teeth and glided down the arcade to the pavilion of the musicians.

It had been understood that after the first hour and a half there was to be an interval for lemonade and sweets and rest, during which they would sit on the cushions and admire the opposite arcade and the airy grace of the pavilions under the light of the moon.

"It must have been here that Muley Aben Hassan and Boabdil used to sit with their courts while the minstrels—or whatever they were in those days—tried to amuse them, and the nautch girls danced, and the captives above envied the captives below," Miss Holmes was beginning as they arranged the cushions, when several of the party gave a low cry, and the hostess paused with her mouth open. A figure had risen before them in the moonlight, slim, young, veiled, the very eidolon of those forgotten women the number of whose heart-beats had depended upon the nod of a tyrannical voluptuary. Only her eyes, long, dark, expressionless, were revealed above the gold tissue of her veil, and Over alone recognized her instantly. He had missed her as they assembled, and was about to go in search of her when she appeared. He held his breath, and the others, one or two of the girls giggling hysterically, hardly knew whether to be frightened or not.

Then the low, soft, dreaming strains of music crept over to them and she began to dance. She had known the old Spanish dances all her life and loved them with all the wild blood in her, despising the more conventional whirl of the drawing-room. She danced none of these tonight, however, but an im-

provisation, born of her knowledge of Moorish traditions, the place and the hour.

As Over realized what she purposed he stepped forward with the intention of stopping the performance, enraged that other men should be in the audience, but arrested by his distaste of a scene. In a moment he sank down on his cushions, wondering that he had doubted her, for it was apparent even in the first few moments that in spite of the graceful abandon of her dancing there was to be nothing to suggest the coarseness of the women that had danced on that spot before her.

But if the swinging and swaying and bending and whirling of her body were without suggestiveness they were the very poetry of beauty. The scarf was bound about her head and over her face below the eyes, but she held a point in either hand, her arms sometimes extended, at others describing curves that made the delicate tissue flutter like the many wings of tiny birds. The spangles on her dress, the diamond buckles on her slippers were a thousand points of light, for the moon was poised directly overhead and flooding the court. The perfume of the scarf stole into the senses of the staring company and completed the illusion, delicately brushing with sensuousness what was otherwise an expression of the rhythm of life, the dreaming of an ardent but virginal soul. So a nauteh girl may have danced for the first time before a king, ignorant then of what was expected of her, dissolving in the joy of rhythmical motion, of innocent pride in her own young beauty.

The arches between the company and the dancer, the fountain above the lions rising in a silver veil behind her, and beyond it the white shining arches with their moving shadows, the distant warbling of the nightingales rising above the swooning music, the Oriental mystery in the eyes above the veil—not one of her audience but surrendered himself, although, in superficial fashion, all had recognized her.

And then, while their senses were locked, while they were hardly conscious whether they slept or waked, a strange and terrible thing happened. From the Room of the Two Sisters beside them the figure of a man leaped like a sword from its scabbard, caught the dancer in his arms, and disappeared whence it had come.

There was a fatal moment of incredulity; then Over leaped to his feet and ran into the dark room. But he had no idea which way to turn, and had lost himself in the Sala de los Ajimeces beyond when he heard Miss Holmes cry sharply:

"He mustn't go alone, and at least I know every foot of the palace. The man will make for the underground rooms or climb out of one of the windows and down the hill to the Albaicin."

The word completed Over's horror, but as he hastily rejoined the party, now voluble in the Room of the Two Sisters, he despatched Rothe and the Spanish artist for the police, and then with little ceremony ordered Miss Holmes to lead the way.

Catalina, in that leap from the dark room to her swaying form, dreamy with its own motion, had recognized Jesus Maria; but in the swift flight that followed her face was pressed so hard against his shoulder that she could neither see nor cry out. Her feet struck against narrow walls, but her arms were pinioned in that strong deft embrace, and rage inwardly as she might he controlled her as easily as if she were bound with cords. It was only when she felt him lift her slightly as he vaulted over a windowledge that she found her opportunity. With a swift writhe of her body she freed her hands and beat upon his face with all her strength, which was not inconsiderable. He was stumbling down the steep declivity below the Comares Tower, and he paused a moment to take breath.

"What do you want?" she cried furiously. "Money?"

He pressed his left hand over her

mouth and dexterously caught both her hands in his right.

"Yes," he said grimly. "The señor your uncle can bring that with the golden *señorita*. It is you or she and the money, too. Keep quiet!" he said violently. "If you cry out I will run a nail through your tongue."

Catalina knew there was no time for any such ceremony at the moment, and the moment was all she had. With another sharp wrench she freed her head and hands, struggled to press her knee against his chest, and clawed his face with her sharp nails. The cliff was but little off the perpendicular, irregular of surface, and a wilderness of high shrubs, rocks and trees. For a man to make the descent in daylight and unencumbered was no mean feat; but to endeavor to accomplish this at night, the moon hidden more often than not by the trees and Comares, with a struggling woman in his arms, tried even the superb strength and skill of the Catalan. He set her down and attempted to wind the long scarf more tightly about her mouth and throat and to bind her hands. But she was too quick for him. She made no attempt to run away, knowing the futility of such a thing, but she braced herself against a rock and fought him. She felt not a spasm of fear, but she thrilled with the consciousness that she fought for more than her liberty undefiled; she fought for freedom to fly back to Over and have an end of subterfuge and delusion. In those moments, as she fought and kicked and scratched like a wildcat she had a vivid and serene vision of herself as Over's wife. She knew it to be writ as clearly as if the hand of destiny traced it on the silver disk above, and while her body obeyed its primal instincts her soul sang.

The Catalan was desperate. He cursed his folly in not stationing his confederate on the Darro instead of in the hovel in the Albaicin; but he had feared confusion and felt contemptuously sure of his ability to manage a mere girl. But he had had no experience of girls whom ranch life had

made vigorous and fearless, and whose fathers had taught them the principles of boxing. Catalina parried his attempts to give her a stunning blow as deftly as she filled her nails with his skin and hair, and she was so well braced he could not trip her. Once he made a sudden dive for her feet with his hands, but she leaped aside and his nose came in contact with the rock.

Suddenly he turned his head. Far above, in the windows of the Hall of the Ambassadors, from which he had made his escape, he heard the sound of voices. That moment was his undoing. With the leap of a panther Catalina was on his back. She pressed her knees into his sides, dragged his head back with one arm while with the other she pounded his unprotected face. He gave a mighty shake, but he might as well have attempted to throw off a wildcat of her own forests. He might exhaust her in time, but so long as she had strength she would hang on, and with a low roar that portended hideous vengeance, he started once more down the bluff.

As Edith Holmes led the race through the many corridors and apartments that lay between the court and the Hall of the Ambassadors she knew that the game was here, if she chose to play it. There was but one place in Granada where an outlaw would be secure, and that was in the Albaicin, and she knew the Alhambra too well not to be sure of the route Catalina's abductor would take. But it was simple enough to persuade Over that the man would be more likely to take an underground route, escaping at the favorable moment by some opening known only to his kind.

The descent to the baths was on the way to the Hall of the Ambassadors, and as she ran down the long corridor her brain whirled with the obsession of the place, and she fancied herself for a moment one of the favorites who had reigned here in the days of Moorish splendor until a fairer captive threatened her own youth and beauty and love of life with a silken

cord and a brief struggle in one of the chambers above. Over's apparent devotion during the first part of the night had roused in her all the passion of which she was capable, and she could feel his hot short breath on her neck as they ran. She had watched his surrender to Catalina's beautiful dancing and his wild instinctive leap to her rescue with bitter jealousy and fear. In a flash she had seen Catalina for what she was—a girl to rouse all the romantic passion in a man; and in all her loveliness, her ideal womanhood and her changing moods she had been his constant companion for three weeks in Spain! But thrust out of sight—the creature of a gipsy—internationally besmirched—Her feet turned to the threshold leading down to the old Moorish bath, where ten minutes could be wasted. But the American girl in her suddenly revolted. Another American girl was in hideous peril, and she shuddered with disgust even more than with pity.

She whirled about. "Prince," she whispered, "you and Helmholtz go down there and search, but I feel sure he has gone out one of the windows." And she ran on to the Hall of the Ambassadors.

They reached it at last and hung out of the windows. Far below a faint sound came to their ears, but they could not determine its nature. An instant later they heard a short but infuriated roar, followed by the sharp call of a woman. Over was already on the other side of the window when Miss Holmes caught his arm.

"Don't!" she cried hysterically.


"It is almost certain death. He is sure to have confederates!"

Over gave her a look of haughty surprise and shook her off. The Frenchman thrust a pistol into his hand.

"I never go without one here. Don't hesitate to shoot."

Over groped and stumbled down the hill, but with far more agility than the encumbered Catalan. There was no path, the thick brush and rocks were everywhere, and the moon made the shadows under the trees the heavier. But when a thin Englishman has spent the greater part of his life on his feet and out of doors he is little likely to lose his balance or skill even on a steep wilderness designed by the cunning Moor as a pitfall for the enemy.

He was halfway down when the way cleared and he saw, several yards beneath him, a curious stumbling figure, half black, half white. In an instant he suspected its meaning, and although he was obliged to laugh he paused and gave a sharp halloo. Catalina answered him with what breath was left in her, and he heard the glad note in her broken cry. He ran on, but in a moment the man stopped abruptly and endeavored once more to shake off his burden. Catalina leaped from his back and ran to one side, bracing herself once more. Over aimed his pistol and fired. The man gave a wild scream of pain, tumbled to his knees, regained his feet and fled. Catalina ran up the hill a few steps, then, suddenly exhausted, leaned against a tree. But Over bore down upon her, and when she saw his eyes she opened her arms.



A DIFFERENCE

"YOU are blessed with four sons-in-law, aren't you?"
"No—infested!"

THE CITY BY NIGHT

WE watched the murmurous summer city night
 With all its passionate languor slowly wake,
 A tangled valley strewn with sound and light,
 And solemn mirth reborn for laughter's sake.

From days o'er-fierce, and lives too empty grown,
 Athirst for youth's lost solace of delight,
 Yet still unsatisfied, we saw life blown
 About mad gardens that were born of night,

Where joy outlived, in byways all bestrewn
 With lamps and painted laughter, might forget,
 One moment might forget its empty noon,
 One midnight lose its outlands of regret!

The night grew old, and in each garden sad,
 Abloom with clamor, and embowered in glare,
 We saw man seek his laughter and seem glad
 For this torn rose, to screen his day's despair!

ARTHUR STRINGER.



JUST SO

"IT is reported that Whoopler's wife has left him."
 "Ah! that tends to confirm the rumor that he is married."



HARDLY POSSIBLE

"YOU should love your enemy."
 "Ye-es; but, you see—well, I am married to him."



"SHE says her ancestors came over in the *Mayflower*."
 "I don't believe it. There were no cut rates in those days."

MRS. PAWLING'S SUBTERFUGE

By Frederic Taber Cooper

DOWN the sparsely lit monotony of Madison avenue Mrs. Pawling had passed, in somnambulist blindness to the foulness of the night. A fine, insistent rain was coating the pavement with a congealing film. It penetrated, unheeded, the thin soles of her shoes, which slipped at the heel with an almost audible suction. It barely stirred her to a dumb resentment against the clinging folds of sodden silk that gripped her ankles, retarding progress. But as she rounded the corner of Forty-second street and merged in the full tide of cross-town traffic, she awoke to a chilled consciousness of her environment.

The cheerful flare from the portals of the Manhattan Hotel evoked responsive gleams from the taut surfaces of dripping umbrellas, held slantwise to the northern wind. An endless chain of stalled cars was working its slow way westward, in spasmodic jerks, outdistanced by the hurrying tramp of the army of pleasure-seekers on the sidewalk. At half-past eight the flood of human life was setting strongly toward Broadway, where the blatant glare of giant theatre signs shone, softened by distance to a shimmering haze. The vigorous stamping of chilled motormen, the insistent clangor of their bells, the raucous cries of ubiquitous newsboys, the whole strident symphony of metropolitan life came to her ear in a faint, far-off hush, drowned by the louder, more vociferous message of a phrase that echoed in her brain unceasingly, beating home its meaning with parrot-like iteration: "Bradley—Hitchcock—

died—last—night; Bradley—Hitchcock—died—last—night."

Mrs. Pawling shivered and drew her damp furs closer. She had been walking, so it seemed to her, for unnumbered hours, keeping time to the rhythm of those five words as children keep time to a counting-out rhyme. A morbid fancy assailed her that for the past two years she and Bradley had been playing a mad, bacchanalian game with fate, and that now it was Bradley whom fate had counted out.

Her husband had flung the bare, brutal fact at her, across the dinner-table, between the news of a victory in the Court of Appeals and a change of officers in his golf club. He had stabbed her with it, in the very act of carving the roast. She could see him yet as he paused, with the carving-knife half raised, and faced her squarely, his keen eyes on a level with her own. As she recalled it now, there seemed to lurk, behind the even indifference of his tone, a suggestion of ironical curiosity as to how she would take the news. Not once, in the last two reckless years, had Leslie Pawling found herself asking, in such a panic of sudden fear, how much her husband really knew.

His systematic avoidance of Bradley had been natural enough. He had the practical man's intolerance of the artistic temperament, the successful man's contempt for one whom prosperity has passed by on the other side, an artist whose pictures seldom sold. Yet hard and narrow as John Pawling was—a man, so his wife scornfully judged him, whose intellectual life

knew no higher joy than the Revised Statutes, and whose physical passions spent themselves in golf—the callousness of his announcement struck her as forced and overdone. "Oh, by the way, your friend, Bradley Hitchcock, died last night." He said it just like that. A human being, a boyhood friend, a client of the office, was dead; and John reduced his death to the level of the jottings, the marginal notes, the by-the-ways of life! He had drawn Bradley's will; he had won the suit that secured him the small income on which he lived; and now he deliberately said, "your friend," shutting himself out from all participation in the loss. Then followed a pause, in which it seemed as though he must be counting her very heart-beats. How much had he been able to read in her face, during the tense, interminable moment while they looked into each other's eyes across the table? She knew, with something akin to self-wonder at the knowledge, that she had neither fainted nor cried out. She had sat there dumbly, with a half-smile frozen on her lips, until sheer terror, forcing grief into the background, stung her into action, and she heard her own voice, sounding from an infinite distance, framing obvious, commonplace questions, the answers to which were of such vital import.

The policeman guarding the Fifth avenue crossing eyed doubtfully the blond young woman with bedraggled skirts, pursuing her unseeing way, careless of spattering mud and horses' hoofs. Noting her evident refinement, he checked his first impulse to speak to her; then hesitated again, as the rays of an arc-light revealed the blind, stricken look in her eyes. Mrs. Pawling was scarcely aware of the friendly hand he laid upon her arm, guiding her across. Memories were racing at express speed through her brain, like the whirling wheels of a clock the escapement of which has been broken. John had answered her questions with expansive freedom; but the quizzical satisfaction that she seemed to read

in his face haunted her yet. While his ponderous tones droned on, her own thoughts had kept up a running accompaniment. The searchlight of intimate knowledge transmuted his bare details into pictures of poignant clearness. The correct appointments of her own cozy dining-room faded from her sight. Instead, she saw the big, old-fashioned room, converted to a studio by a huge, well-like skylight. She saw again its dominant note of chaotic confusion, its paradoxical medley of the debris of a workshop and the luxury of a boudoir; a score of canvases, finished and unfinished, studies in the nude for the most part, touched elbow with photographs of favorite Botticellis, framed with unquestioned taste. A rare old Horace, a Dante in Florentine vellum kept company with a shelf of French novels, Zola, Maupassant, *Les Diaboliques* of Barbey d'Aurévilly. The cheap, uneven floor of stained pine had worn lines across his few choice pieces of Eastern carpeting—Khiva, Bokhara, Daghestan—for whose time-mellowed coloring he had taught her to share his passion. And everywhere, on shelves and tables, on floor and wall, were strewn and scattered the silks and bronzes and carved wood, the pipes and swords and strings of beads, the strange, bizarre flotsam which a lifetime of wandering gathers together from the wreckage of bohemia.

In these surroundings Bradley died alone, sitting at his table, writing a letter—of course, it was the big table before the fire, on which he had so often written to her. The "dago janitor" had found him there in the morning—that was John's jarring phrase for discreet, smiling Paolo, the heavy-browed Sicilian who tended Bradley's rooms, gliding in and out so silently that his presence had not seemed an intrusion. She pictured to herself Paolo's mild surprise at finding the gas still burning, his sudden start at sight of the inert, huddled figure in the chair, his flood of voluble Italian, apostrophizing all the saints at once when he realized that Bradley was dead.

The first that John had heard was when Dr. Sands had called up their office, Pawling & Parker, on the telephone, not knowing whom else to notify. The doctor thought that Hitchcock must have been dead since midnight. He said that there was nothing surprising in the death; he had been expecting the man's heart to give out suddenly any day. Parker had attended to the details. The brother, Seth, the clergyman, had been notified, and was coming down from Schenectady to take him back to the old family home, where the funeral would be held. "He'll be here tonight," Pawling had concluded, with the heavy deliberation that his wife at all times found peculiarly irritating; "Parker and I are to meet him at the studio and help him overhaul Bradley's things, so that he won't have to come down again right after the funeral." The words seemed to give him some inward satisfaction, for, after a moment's pause, he repeated them, adding in further elucidation, "His sketches and letters and private papers."

All the while her husband talked, somewhere in the back of Mrs. Pawling's brain a still, small voice had been persistently asking just what the fact of Bradley Hitchcock's death meant to her. Not in the way of personal loss—that was something she must not, dared not, think of yet. Later on, when the time for action was over, when she could escape from the torture of inquisitorial eyes, she might open the floodgate of these thoughts, the whole tumultuous, pent-up torrent of them. What she had waited for was a threat, a danger, a crisis to be met. Now it had come. The thought of her husband there tonight, in those rooms, seemed the one thing too much, the last unbearable turn of the screw.

A merciful interruption came. The telephone in the hall rang with a teasing insistence. With every sense on a strain she heard Pawling's heavy voice engaged in a one-sided conversation. "Yes, this is eleven-one-three. Yes, I said so. This is Mr. Pawling at the 'phone. Oh, hello; Jim, I didn't recog-

nize your voice. What's that? Can't you meet me?"

So it was Parker at the telephone. For a moment a hope was kindled that something had happened to prevent the meeting tonight, that she might gain a day's respite; but her husband's next words destroyed it. "Oh, all right; never mind if you are late. I may be late myself. Sorry she felt it so. Tell her I say she always was too sympathetic. No, Leslie didn't turn a hair. You know, he never came here as he did to your place. Of course, now the poor man is dead there is no good in raking up old scores; but the fact is, he was not altogether *persona grata* in our home. All right, about eight-thirty, then. The Reverend Hitchcock can't get there before nine, even if his train isn't held up by the storm."

She hardly heard her husband saying: "That was Parker on the 'phone. He says that Laura has just gone to pieces about Hitchcock." What did she care whether Jim Parker's emotional little wife relieved a shallow grief with a few hysterical tears? The vision of her husband in Bradley's rooms drove out all other thoughts. Her husband, Bradley's executor; her husband opening desks and drawers and closets, searching, prying into the dead man's papers and finding—what would her husband find? That was the question that hammered itself home till she grew faint and dizzy. What wretched, forgotten, irrefutable bit of proof might he not discover in those rooms where she had come and gone in reckless confidence? Letters? Yes, of course, there might be letters, a single one, a score, any number of them. He might have burned them or he might not. She groped helplessly in her memory, trying to recall what written word of hers might now rise up to testify against her. But it was not alone a question of what she had written; it was the bare existence of any letters at all, the damning fact that she had written to Bradley, which, dovetailing in with other facts, might change John's doubts to certainty. In her overwrought mood

it seemed as though every chair and table in the studio, the very pictures on the walls and volumes on the shelves, had some separate betrayal to make, some subtle hint of a feminine presence.

This was the fear that had stung her, goaded her forth blindly into the storm, without definite hope or purpose. She knew only that she must follow Pawling, be near him, share the knowledge of his discoveries. The menace lurking in those old, familiar rooms fascinated her. Their lure was irresistible. Over and over again, during the walk that seemed interminable, she told herself that if her husband found her there, if he stumbled upon her at the door or on the stairs, she must be armed to parry his questions; she must have a plausible excuse, a story all cut and dried, to explain her mad pursuit of him through the storm. But her numbed brain refused to meet the need; she groped helplessly for some idea not idiotic in its flimsiness. She was still groping when she reached the oyster house that occupied the ground floor of the building in which Bradley Hitchcock had lived.

To reach the entrance of the stairway that led to the studio she must pass the windows of the oyster house. In one of them a belated couple were still lingering over the remnants of their dinner. The man, with both elbows on the table, was gazing intently into the woman's eyes. Seen through the rain-blurred window-pane, his hard features seemed, to Leslie Pawling's excited imagination, to merge into a grotesque caricature of her own husband. She shrank away and slipped furtively through the vestibule beyond. Down the vista of the dark hallway a waiter opened a door, emitting a sudden burst of sound, laughter and voices and the discreet clatter of many dishes together with the pungent odor of frying fat.

Effacing herself against the shadowed wall, the woman glided up the first short flight, reached for a small key in its hiding-place on a nail behind a molding, and let herself through the

inner door that barred the upper floors at night from trespassers. She passed the dark and silent offices on the second floor, the real estate broker in front, the postage-stamp dealer, the manicure parlors in the rear. The single gas burner was turned to a mere pin-point of light. The rickety banisters, the battered stairs, with one well-remembered step, the third from the top, that would creak despite the most cautious footstep, looked doubly shabby in contrast with the gaudy red of a new Brussels carpet flaunting itself in the light from the floor above.

Here she had reason to dread inquisitive eyes. The third floor was occupied by a Spanish instructor and his French wife, who held their classes by night as well as by day. This evening, as usual, the door of the large front room was ajar. She could plainly hear the instructor's patient voice drilling a slow-witted pupil upon Ollendorffian phrases: "What is the matter with the friend of the señora? The friend of the señora is very ill; the friend of the señora will die." Mrs. Pawling hurried desperately up the one remaining flight. The steps seemed to multiply beneath her feet. Taking a tiny pass-key from her purse, she let herself into the queer little square hallway that served as antechamber to Bradley's studio and bedroom. Between cold and fear and the effort of the long climb, she was almost sobbing for breath.

Behind the door on her left, within the larger room that served as studio, men's voices could be heard, and the occasional rustling of papers. She recognized her husband's rasping tones, and the hearty, jovial voice of Jim Parker, unwontedly subdued.

With infinite precaution, she pushed open the door of the bedroom; these old hinges creaked horribly sometimes and without warning. Suddenly she recoiled, stifling a scream, and leaned half fainting against the wall. In all the mental pictures that for the past half-hour she had conjured up, of what she should find awaiting her, curiously enough the dead man had had no share.

There, in the familiar little room, furnished with an almost feminine coquetry of form and color, the undertaker had performed his task and gone. The heavy portière in the intervening doorway shut out the light and cheer of the studio. Only the flickering flame of a Venetian lamp, hanging in the corner above the window-seat, made visible the silent outline of the coffin. The upper half was open, and the lamp's rays, shining through many-colored glass, shed a greenish light upon the upturned face, cruelly emphasizing the stamp of death, accentuating the hollows at the temples, where the black hair was tinged with gray, turning livid the thin, straight nose, the sunken cheeks, the nervous, fastidious mouth.

Shaking with a morbid dread, Mrs. Pawling dragged herself to the coffin side, and in dumb, instinctive protest raised her hand to the lamp, turning it until the green light was replaced by red. As if by magic the features of the dead man softened; the trick of light and shade, which but a moment before had writhed his lips into a sardonic sneer at fate, now wrought the equal wonder of making him seem to smile in his sleep. The woman bent tremulously over him. Here was the man she had loved. Her fear of death was forgotten; likewise the greater terror that had dogged her footsteps hither. In another moment she could have found a merciful relief in tears.

The voices behind the portière had gradually risen in tone. The two men were recalling early memories of Bradley Hitchcock, and had already forgotten the solemnity of death.

Suddenly a careless laugh awoke the woman once more to a full consciousness of her precarious position. She strained her ears to catch their next words. It was Parker who had laughed, in frank amusement, at the dead man's frailties. The careless talk ran on, in reminiscence of the days before Bradley had come into Leslie Pawling's life, days of which she had often felt an unspoken jealousy. She had few delusions about Bradley Hitchcock. Women had

always been to him a series of agreeable episodes; she realized that. She herself was at best only an episode like the rest. She had held him for two years; she might have held him a day, a month, a year longer. But while she held him she believed that she held him exclusively. This was her one remnant of pride, and she clung to it. The voices of the men ran on, cynical, amused, mocking, stirring the ashes of old scandals, stripping the dead man naked.

Footsteps sounded on the stairs and along the hall. "The Reverend Hitchcock," she heard her husband hazard as he rose to open the door. But she knew better; it was Paolo, coming to replenish the fire. Under cover of the momentary stir, the rattle of coals, the colloquy that accompanied it, Mrs. Pawling nerved herself to begin her furtive hunt through bureau, desk and closet for notes, letters, anything and everything of hers that might be there. The bureau yielded nothing but a flood of memories. The desk must contain something of what she sought; but it was locked. Jim or her husband must have the keys. For all she knew, they might have ransacked that desk already.

A moment later the absurdity of the thought struck her. If he had found those letters John would not be sitting tranquilly there, extracting a cynical amusement from the Sicilian's voluble eulogy of the dead man. In a flood of grotesque English that grew blinder and more hopeless as his earnestness increased, Paolo was trying to make clear the debt he owed to Bradley. She knew the story well: his first wretched months in America, his discouragement, his nostalgia for Palermo and Bradley's interest and aid, just when he had lost heart altogether. "I tella you, I tella you da trut', he mucha gooda man to me, Misser 'Itchacock; I tella you, he one golla darna gooda man, Misser 'Itchacock!"

The woman grew hot with indignation as she listened. Why did they keep him there answering their idle questions, making sport for them with

the grotesqueness of his sincerity? Pawling's next words enlightened her.

"I say, Paolo—your name is Paolo, isn't it?—he was a great man with women, wasn't he, your 'Misser 'Itchacock'? Plenty of them coming here to see him, I'll be bound."

So that was what John was after. He had got an important witness on the stand, and he proposed to cross-examine him.

Paolo acquiesced eagerly. "Plenta woomans coma 'ere."

He was glad to testify to Bradley Hitchcock's prowess. What were they like, these women? Were they tall or short, dark or fair? Were they pretty women or plain, according to Paolo's standard? As Pawling multiplied his questions the Sicilian became suddenly more wary; "I no tink" became the burden of all his answers.

"Oh, come, Paolo, I know better than that. You must have passed them many a time on the stairs. You probably know the originals of half those paintings on the wall. I'll wager they are not all professional models, either."

Discreet and loyal Paolo! She could almost see his deprecating shrug. He was plainly determined to know nothing that might compromise the "golla darna gooda man" lying dead in the next room.

As Paolo's footsteps died away upon the stairs, the creaking third step telling of his downward progress, Pawling continued to elaborate his train of thought. All his life women had been Hitchcock's bane. He could talk of nothing else; he could think of nothing else; he could paint nothing else. "Look at this portfolio of sketches! Look at the pictures on the wall! And Lord knows what we shall find among the man's private papers! I tell you, Parker, it would be missionary work to go through them before his brother comes, and put a lot of letters out of harm's way. He always was an absent-minded beggar about letters."

Mrs. Pawling cowered like a hunted hare into the little closet behind the head of the bed. It seemed impos-

sible that John had not heard the swish of her damp skirts as she dragged them desperately in after her.

As she waited, huddled in the stuffy darkness, pressed back by the closed door against coats, bath-robcs, jackets redolent of stale tobacco, something hard, a knife or key in a trousers pocket hurt her wrist. Almost at the same instant came the signal of her release—John's voice from the further room, saying: "We shall have to wait. None of the keys will fit."

Key, key? Where did Bradley keep his key? The next minute she had the closet door wide open and was searching in trembling haste through trousers, coats and waistcoats. At last she found it in the pocket of a smoking-jacket.

To unlock the desk was the work of a moment. As she did so Parker's voice reached her, laden with a fresh terror.

"Here is the mail I found in Hitchcock's letter-box downstairs. We may as well go through that anyhow."

When had she written her last letter to Bradley? Was it a century ago, or was it only the night before last? A fear which became at once a certainty assailed her, that it had arrived too late, that it was now among the letters which Jim Parker and her husband were now opening. The careless comments ran on:

"Bills rendered, most of them. Here's one from his dentist. Here's another from his tailor, 'Please remit.' This one is from his club; oh, it's a receipt for dues. What's that big square envelope? Looks like an invitation. Oh, I know what that is; wedding cards from Stanley Ashmead—I had some myself this morning. Here's a typical woman's note, tinted paper, no scent. Looks like another bid to something."

She heard the sound of linen paper tearing, then Parker's voice in an altered tone: "I wish I hadn't opened this. It's an intimate sort of letter, just signed, 'L. P.' Hadn't we better burn it?"

"Let me see that letter." John's tone was infinitely queerer than Park-

er's; it sounded like the embodiment of her worst fears. The silence which followed was almost tangible. Through the heavy curtain she could almost see him studying and turning that letter, dissecting, analyzing, reading between the lines. Parker's voice at last relieved the strain.

"Drop it, John. I know what you are thinking, but you will be sorry tomorrow."

"I must know my own wife's writing, even if I didn't know her initials. It's no use, Jim. This just explains a lot of things that puzzled me."

"Nonsense, man! Dozens of women write that same ugly, fashionable hand nowadays. It's as much like my wife's writing as it is like yours. I might just as well try to fasten the letter on her, if that's all you have to go on. Leslie and Laura are not the only women in the world who have a right to sign themselves 'L. P.'"

"That is kindly meant, Jim, but I don't think we will burn that letter."

Mechanically Mrs. Pawling turned back to her task. What was the use? The matter had been taken from her hands by fate, and would be settled according to fate's grim pleasure. Now that the harm was done, it was but an added irony to find in the desk only a few scattered notes, harmless invitations for the most part. But suddenly, in the depths of a pigeon-hole, she came upon a whole bundle of them. She did not know that she had written so many letters during the entire two years. Scented paper, too; she had never used scented paper; she abominated it. She leaned toward the flickering lamp. Surely this was not her writing, though oddly like it. Parker's words still echoed in her ears: "It's as much like my wife's writing as it is like yours."

Forgetful of caution she sprang upon the window-seat to get nearer to the lamp, and opened letter after letter in a silent rage. She knew, before she found it, that somewhere in that package she would find Laura's name. She strained her eyes to read the dates. The correspondence cov-

ered the last two years, and even further back. The whole wretched, intimate history lay before her. There was not room for a single flattering doubt. Laura, whom she had always despised as a weak, vain, insipid little woman, a woman eight years older than herself, who looked her age, every day of it—and he had kept Laura's letters rather than hers. Her own folly, her blindness, her stupidity loomed up colossal before her. Here she was, a rat in a trap. The letter in her husband's hands, the muddy print of her sodden shoes on the carpet, the disorder of desk and bureau—why, it was impossible that she should cover her trail. A vengeful inspiration flashed over her; the woman who had robbed her should make atonement. Laura had taken Bradley Hitchcock from her, had proved beyond a doubt a prior claim. Laura should bear the burden of the penalty, as well. Deliberately Mrs. Pawling secreted her own letters in her dress; with equal deliberation she brushed a metal paper-cutter from the desk. It fell with a clatter to the floor. Then, with a startled cry, she dashed not too silently nor too swiftly toward the hall.

For the first minute the two men were rooted to their seats with astonishment. Then they sprang forward, each through a separate door. Her husband overtook her in the hallway and drew her, none too gently, back into the studio.

"I was so frightened, John. I got into the wrong room. I was trying to find you—"

He cut her short roughly. "Don't lie about it, with those letters in your hand! We know what you came for. Give them to me, and tell the truth if you can."

"I shall tell you nothing until you let me go. You are hurting my wrist."

She wrenched herself free and faced him for a moment defiantly, then dropped both arms to her sides, as though in complete surrender, utterly discouraged with the knowledge of her failure. Her eyes traveled past her husband, as though she did not see him.

She spoke directly to Parker, who had been watching her with wondering pity.

"I see now that I did wrong to come," she said steadily. "I was trying to act for the best. I wanted to save Laura if I could. I wanted to spare you the pain of knowing." With a sudden gesture she handed the letters to Parker.

The studio was very still. The man holding the letters stood studying them, a gray look creeping over his frank, jovial face as he grasped their

import. Pawling's restless glance wandered suspiciously from his friend to his wife, unable to discredit the evidence of his own senses, yet still refusing to be convinced. The woman gazed from under lowered lids upon the havoc she had wrought. The first flush of malevolent satisfaction had faded. Already she was conscious that the knowledge that she owed her safety to a paltry vengeance was poor companionship down the vista of joyless years that stretched emptily before her.



PARTICEPS CRIMINIS

WERE you not partly to blame? Confess!
How could I know what you really meant?
Your lips said no; but your eyes said yes.

You sat beside me, a wind-blown tress
Touched me with ravishing blandishment;
Were you not partly to blame? Confess!

Why did I kiss you? A tenderness
In your glance, I fancied, gave consent;
Your lips said no; but your eyes said yes.

How could I help it, you sorceress?
Your eyes—why are they so eloquent?
Were you not partly to blame? Confess!

Of course, you didn't quite acquiesce,
But—well, I stick to my argument:
Your lips said no; but your eyes said yes.

Who heeds, dear heart, what the lips profess,
When the eyes say something different?
Were you not partly to blame? Confess!
Your lips said no; but your eyes said yes.

CHARLES LOVE BENJAMIN.



NOT THE SAME

"SHE introduced him as her cousin once removed, didn't she?"
"Oh, no—as her husband once removed."

TWO RECURRING

By Gilbert Frankau

IT was a hypercritically furnished study, monomaniacally bepic-tured with engravings of religious paintings. Its owner, Oscar Meredith, was an atheist, a belletrist and an undischarged bankrupt.

Through the curled cigarette smoke the two men regarded each other with that look of uninterest which betokens a friendship begun at Eton.

"So you disbelieve in the 'beauty and strength of a woman's devotion'," said Cosmo reflectively. "I wish I could hold the same view."

"If you ever dare to hold my opinions, our friendship will be at an end," replied Oscar with some acidity; "the inequality of our temperaments is the only tie that holds us. You are a successful journalist, I am a literary success; you have paid comfort, I have unpaid luxury; I have genius, you have mere brains; you are twenty-six and eligible; I am twenty-eight and a bohemian. *Dulce est discipere in loco parentis.*" The owner of the study, pleased with his word-conjuring, lit a fresh cigarette and a new train of thought in his companion.

"You are right, of course. *Non sum uualis eram.* But still I never had half your ability."

"Your very unsuccess, my dear Cosmo, is a proof of your talent. To one less gifted the very name of Cosmo would have meant an assured position in the world of underpaid literature, instead of an office-chair in the under-world of paid journalism. Not that I won't admit that an editor has his functions—so has the tailor. Both wield the scissors, after all."

"Still, my dear Oscar, there is a

reason for my having quitted the pursuit of the competent for the pursuit of a competency. If it interests you, and the cigarettes hold out, I will give you that reason."

"Reasons are always rather tedious, aren't they? However, as you sound unreal enough to be in earnest, you may continue. Only take care 'what word escapes the barrier of your teeth.' Since the damning run of one hundred nights has been accorded by the public to my last play—and I had thought it so far above their heads—one of the only pleasures left me is the revealing of my friends' confidences. Still, as no one is so garrulous as the man with a skeleton in his cupboard, I presume I cannot do much harm."

Cosmo Conrad assumed a negligent attitude and his editorial air.

"Doubtless you will remember," he said, "that three years ago we took a trip to Egypt together. It was after Mollie Sefton threw you over."

"Of course, the Sphinx and the Minx, or *l'homme de trente ans*. I remember."

"*Eh bien*, while you were moaning for Mollie, in an '*amours décomposés*' pose and the best suite at Shephard's, I spent my time in imbibing the local color and the local drinks of Egypt. *Inter alia*, I experimented with opium. That was the beginning of my visions."

"I used to occupy an exceedingly dirty couch in some low drinking-shop 'with a certain name of its own, no doubt,' and whiff myself out of the acute environments of A.D. into the mystic realms of B.C. Nothing ever seemed quite clear, and yet I had a strange sense of familiarity with the people and places of my dreams. They

were all very vague; snapshots, as it were, of things one learnt at school, *summa diligencia*, as the text-books have it. Once I remember seeing the Parthenon, dazzlingly white in the noonday sun, and saying to another equally Hellenic gentleman that Praxiteles had wasted a lot of time on his statues that no one could ever see. However, I didn't take much notice, thinking it was merely a reflex-action of the memory to my school-days.

"When you were cured—it took some three months, I remember—we returned home, leisurely as was our wont, *via* Italy, remaining a few days in Rome.

"One morning you suggested the Janiculum for a stroll, as being cool and unmarred, save for Garibaldi's statue.

"We were standing close to the parapet, and you, with an after-breakfast banality that was almost Philistine, quoted 'The white roofs of his home.' I turned toward the Campagna, and saw the Tuscan cavalry galloping across the plain."

He paused for effect and a whisky-and-soda.

"But we hadn't any cocktails that morning," protested Oscar.

"It wasn't cocktails; it was facts," continued Cosmo. "I actually saw them with the sun glinting on their helmets, through the dust raised by their horses' hoofs.

"Then with a clang, *pour ainsi dire*, the gates of memory swung back.

"You went home shortly after that, leaving me in Rome, alleging at the time, I remember, that too many 'Cooks' spoil the town.

"I remained, hoping for further revelations. My mind was full of the story I would write, if only my memory would yield up its secret.

"Then I saw *her* for the first time in the Forum, and it all came back with a rush. I had been, I discovered, a kind of major-domo in the house of one Pontius, during the time of Horatius: she was a serving-maid with blue eyes and golden hair. The type of all types I most detest."

"Then, of course, you ended by marrying her!"

"Exactly! The annoying part was that Catullus's marriage song had not been written.

"Since then it has come back to me gradually. I have lived many lives through all the great crises of the world's history, and yet each of them has been lacking in piquancy. Each time that I am reincarnated *she* reappears, and we marry. Now, perhaps, you will understand why all enthusiasm has faded out of my life. I am being hunted down the eons by a blonde: you know how I detest blondes—a colorless, never-changing maiden, with bovine eyes and an ambiguous complexion. My lives open big with the promise of adventure. I dream of playing a part on the world's stage: then when I am twenty-four or twenty-six—it used to be younger when we lived further south—*she* comes into my existence, with her stupid blue eyes and irritating hair, to bind me to the commonplace altar of a humdrum existence.

"With her I have tilled a farm in the Apennines, while Nero played his lyre to burning Rome; with her I have stayed behind when Xerxes marched on Greece; she kept me to her side in Norway, while the ships of the Vikings sailed forth to plunder; for her I kept a wayside inn near Dijon, while Paris was shrieking for the blood of the aristocrats; more, I was the only neolithic man who never committed murder, because my mate insisted on our taking a cave that none else wanted. I have stayed at her side while all the other Greeks were on the windy plains of Troy."

"I presume she was afraid of your catching cold," interpolated Oscar. "Yours is indeed a case of *taedium laudamus*. But I interrupt: pray continue your reminiscences."

"The worst is yet to come—she, too, remembers, and is, if anything, even more bored than I am. But there is no escape. Before she is twenty and I am twenty-six, we *must* meet, and, meeting, *must* marry.

"The last time she died I went down on my knees to her, and implored her not to come back; and though she was nearly dead, her gray lips faltered, 'Not if I can help it.'"

"Tomorrow is my twenty-sixth birthday; will she keep her promise? I dare not hope so."

"Now, perhaps, you realize why I am a failure. For the last three years I have been obliged to work, because I shall be obliged to marry. Many and many a time I have contemplated suicide—as if that could do more than postpone matters more than a century or two! It would be more bearable were she a brunette."

"I wonder if you understand how I yearn for your gift of easy epigram and easy bankruptcy. The *her* that is in me drives me to earn a living, and makes me wish I were dead."

His companion blew the smoke of his cigarette through his nose, and then said languidly, as if it were an affair of everyday occurrence:

"Very tedious. In your place I should consult a solicitor. Arthur Norton would be just the man to choke off that kind of lady."

"My dear Oscar, your *sang froid* is remarkably irritating—therefore I shall leave you. Rudyard made his 'finest story in the world' out of far less material than I have given you tonight."

"Rudyard, my dear fellow, has not yet realized that nothing is so uninteresting as the unusual. I, thank heaven, lack his enthusiasm, and am even more obscure in my style."

"Nevertheless, I am off. Tomorrow I go down to Devonshire to stay with a friend. The shooting season being over, there is a chance of my not being too bored. Good night."

"Good night," said Oscar, resuming his Brantôme and his glasses.

With an old-time slowness that was almost invigorating, the Paddington express drew up in the inspiring gloom of Honiton station, and deposited thereon Cosmo, a headache and several uninteresting commercials.

His friend Edric, in a brougham, a cap and gaiters, met him with the stereotyped greeting and the warning that they were already late for dinner.

"We have quite a house-party," he continued as they rattled toward dinner, "several charming girls—among them an heiress, with fifty thousand pounds in consols, and no brains in her head."

"What does she look like?—though heiresses are never ugly," said Cosmo, feeling a little alarmed.

"Quite an English type. Blue eyes, golden hair and a Grecian nose."

"The same nose she had at the time of Themistocles," groaned Cosmo to his shattered soul.

"Her hands and feet might be smaller," continued Edric. "Her name is Brown."

"It was always something common," thought Cosmo; but their arrival at the house cut short his gloomy reflections.

He dressed for dinner moodily and smokelessly, wondering if that night was to be a prologue to another forty years of contented matrimonial infelicity.

He entered the drawing-room with a heavy heart and a light smile, and saluted his hostess, engaged, as always, in match-making with a zeal that would have done credit to a foreman at Bryant & May's. Edric's wife was one of those women who marry young and wish all their friends to have the same handicap.

She pounced on the gloomy editor with enthusiasm. "You've kept us all waiting," she said, flinging a "quite ready for dinner" at the footman. "Come and be introduced to the girl I want you to take in to dinner—such a pretty thing, and"—confidentially—"lots of money."

"Mr. Conrad—Miss Brown; Miss Brown—Mr. Conrad." She whisked off, leaving him alone with the heiress.

Their glances met, and all interest faded out of both.

"But you promised not to come back," he said piteously.

"I did try, Alphonse, but I had to. It wasn't my fault; I simply arrived."

"Well, I call it very mean of you," he said, giving her his arm. "But you seem to forget I am no longer Alphonse, but Cosmo—Cosmo Conrad. I edit a paper, and am considered intellectual among my middle-class acquaintance."

"Horrible. I am an heiress this time."

"Then there is some balm in Gilead," he retorted as they sat down to dinner.

"Let me see, were we ever in Gilead?" she replied, taking a spoonful of the English for soup.

"My dear Lydia, can't you let the dead past bury its head, like the ostrich?"

"Excuse me, we are not in Rome; Angelina Brown, if you please. My father was the renowned soap-boiler of that name."

"Angelina—Brown—soap-boiler," he muttered as he turned to Veuve Clicquot for solace.

"Can't you ever be a brunette?" he pleaded as he toyed wearily with the wasted wing of a chicken.

"Haven't you got used to me in ten thousand years?" she answered despondently, and both turned to their neighbors.

He drained his fifth glass of champagne with an awful feeling that it was taking no effect. So it was true, he thought, it was his dismal destiny to toboggan slowly down the ringing grooves of Time with this golden-headed clod forever guiding the bob-sleigh of his matrimonial existence. It was getting worse, he reflected. Each succeeding rehabilitation increased the ignominy of his position.

Once, he remembered, eons ago, when their everlasting liaison had been but a few centuries old, he had thrashed her within an inch of her life. In the cloud-burdened sky of his twentieth-century mind the thought was as a little rift of sunlight.

But in each succeeding phase she had been less the docile slave and more the hated equal. Now, she would be even more, almost his superior. For marry her he knew he must.

"It might have been worse, though,"

he thought; "supposing she had been an American!"

When the ladies left them he solaced himself with his host's old port, and for its sake bore with his host's old stories.

Later he rejoined the soap-boileress with haste and distaste.

"We had better get it over," he said, with a desperate attempt at gaiety. "Will you come for a stroll in the grounds?"

"Certainly. By the way, you stoop more than ever," she replied gloomily.

"I know; yet I was as fine a young cave-dweller as one could meet in a day's walk when we first met. Let me see, was that before or after the Glacial Period?"

"After, of course; I am an heiress and have had an education—haven't you? Please don't go on 'reminiscing'; the very thought of that time makes me cold."

"The whole process is so ineffably tedious," he murmured apologetically. "I should like to be a vegetable just for once; it can't be any duller, and one doesn't have to take exercise."

"You usen't to talk like that in the hanging gardens of Babylon," she retorted.

"Yes, but then we had been married only ten thousand years."

They lounged slowly down the rhododendron walk to a little summer-house they knew of. Even a proposal that has been accepted *ad nauseam* requires solitude.

"You were never chatty," she said illogically.

"Never with you," he corrected; "who could be? Why, even I, who have known you since the world began, have never yet heard you say one illuminating sentence."

"Do you remember clearly when we first began to get so bored with each other?" she queried innocently.

"No; so far as I can recollect you have always tired me; even when I was a polygamist and not required to see much of you."

"Then why do we always marry?" She had asked the question and

heard the answer in Aramaic, Persian, Greek and Norse, in the rude bark of the cave-man and the ruder French of the Midi innkeeper. Still, it was her only conquest, and, womanlike, she wished to make the most of it.

"Because you are you and I am I. Because I can no more help proposing than you can help accepting."

They entered the summer-house. He took her hand, and sat holding it, thinking that it was even less stimulating than usual.

"You don't mind my holding your hand, do you? It's such an old habit, and it's too late to give it up now. I've always begun like this. Only I'd rather not call you Angelina, if you don't mind."

"You have over four hundred names to choose from," she said; "only, choose quickly."

"Then let it be Lydia. That sounds quite uncommon here in England; though it was the name of every other tiring-wench in Rome."

"Say *femme de chambre*," she interrupted; "it's less likely to be misconstrued."

"Listen, Lydia," he continued, in his best leaderette manner, "before I propose, tell me two things. First, is there any hope of a refusal?"

"None," she answered despondently.

"Then, is there anything in your

present life which could be construed into an obstacle to our marriage?"

"Alas, no! My temper is as perfect as ever, and I have no bad habits."

"None?" he queried. "Not even a hobby that might be construed into a hindrance? Cats, or picture-post-cards?"

"I do collect first editions of Guy Boothby," she admitted, blushing scarlet.

He bowed his face in his hands and groaned. The next minute he was himself again.

"It might have been Marie Corelli," he said unctuously. "Lydia, for the four hundred and tenth time, will you marry me against my will?"

"Yes, against my own, even."

"Then I shall have to kiss you."

Perfunctorily their lips met for one grudging instant.

"Let us be going," he said.

They strolled slowly toward the twinkling house-lights; his head was bowed on his breast, she was weeping softly. Suddenly, she raised her tear-stained eyes with a gleam of hope.

"This time," she said tremulously, "we are rich enough to be divorced."

"No cause," he muttered hopelessly.

"Compatibility of temperament," she replied.

"Darling!" he cried as he folded her to his breast.



EXTENUATION

FATHER—Confound him! He cannot even make a living for himself.

DAUGHTER—No; but, papa, think how gracefully he fails to do so.



A POOR relation is not necessarily without money. The poorest kind of a relation is one who has any amount of it and forgets to remember you in his will.

THE LOST HERITAGE

By Theodosia Garrison

THE close companionship of earth,
 Its tenderness and might,
 These things were ours by blood and birth,
 By heritage and right.

We were born brothers to the wood,
 And in our veins there ran
 That fire of joy and hardihood
 Which is the blood of Pan.

The language of the leaves was ours,
 And ours the kindred tie
 That told us in the lightless hours
 What strange, wild mate went by.

Yet, brothers of our heritage,
 What is there left today?
 We sold it for a petty wage,
 For servitude and pay.

Stone upon stone our cities grow
 Mask-like on earth's shamed face;
 We cause our kindred's overthrow
 To build our hinds a place.

Crowded and cringing and content
 We cry from mart and door,
 "Behold the pottage excellent
 We sold our birthright for!"

We have forgotten day by day
 That once we walked elate,
 How all majestic was our sway,
 How mighty our estate.

This be our shame—to doubt their worth
 Who one day understood
 The close companionship of earth,
 The high hills' brotherhood.



"THANK heaven, the days of religious persecution are over."
 "But they aren't. Our church is having a fair this week."

THE IDOLATRY OF SHIRLEY BURR

By Beatrix Demarest Lloyd

FROM his earliest boyhood Shirley Burr, Junior, had borne his father's name with a sense of pride and responsibility. To him it stood for all that was admirable and brilliant, and he held it high in his boyish hands as a newly accoladed knight might cherish the banner of his nobility.

It was his secret distress that, although there were definite things which he had resolved were not for his father's son to do, he found these resolutions curiously lapsed from memory, or strangely impotent of influence, when the definite things appeared as temptations. And his still, small voice had to invent no more original reproach than "Shirley Burr!" to reduce him to an almost degrading penitence.

The idol whose name he bore was to him at first an incomprehensible being. A man he was, with all a man's independence and freedom, yet curiously choosing to sit at his desk in the library, working through the bright beckoning hours of the day, and sometimes even far into the dusky, warm, appealing time of sleep. It may be true that the young Shirley had seen and recognized this peculiar devotion to labor but once or twice in all his boyish days—for certain it was that Shirley's mother had an anxious line between her overlaid brows—and yet the impression dwarfed the less amazing pursuits of his father, and made the bended figure above the desk the first picture to spring into his mind at the mention of the cherished name.

Once, during his first day at school, when he had been asked his father's

business, he had replied that his father was a brilliant man, and when the questioner, secretary of the establishment, had further pressed the inquiry, not being quite satisfied that this vocation would insure the tuition fee, Shirley had been fairly put to it to give any more definite idea of his father's means of livelihood. Did Mr. Burr go to an office in the morning and return at night? Oh, no; he remained at home and went out in the afternoon to see if there was any mail at his club, or any articles of his in the magazines. Then he was a magazine writer, a journalist, perhaps? Shirley was very proud on this point: whatever his father did, he did brilliantly, and people sent him cheques quite fabulous in amount, and always had a very good time when they came to dinner.

The physical personality of his idol was no less a thing to be proud of. Even the boy, inclined as a boy might be to accept his parents as standards of all that was acceptable, realized that his father was, to others as well, unusual, and took pride in the attention he attracted whenever they went walking together. He sometimes heard the low-voiced comments of the people whom they passed, and wondered if his father did too. But there was no telling, for a furtive glance into the dear face so far above him would reveal only its usual geniality, and the smile that seemed always ready upon his lips. And then, too, grown people were very inattentive.

Shirley could probably have described his father as accurately as a much older person, for he frequently amused himself, when a sleepless hour

came to him at night, in picturing his idol as he sat below-stairs in the library, the tall figure, so invariably at ease, the slender-fingered hands so caressing to the book they held, the large picturesque head, with its dark waving hair, great mournful eyes, a laughing mouth, a long, fine nose, and white skin like his mother's.

He had once slipped down to this favorite room, in one of these waking hours, to get a glimpse of the man, and see if he really were so wonderful, or if he himself had not confused with his recollection some of his mother's teaching of a radiant Deity. Shirley Burr, the elder, had seen the bright eye at the edge of the door, and putting his book away, welcomed the child with a royal laugh. They had sat together for a long time, the boy almost painfully awake from the excitement, until his mother, awakened by the soft conspiracy of laughter, had come down and chidden them both for their naughtiness. He remembered the sense of security and ease that had filled him as his father had obediently lifted him to carry him back to the outgrown nursery, and how the low, delicious voice had rumbled against his nestling cheek when his father protested that brutish sleep was no such repairer of Nature's daily damage as the pretty hour they had had together in the big soft chair.

Shirley Burr, Junior, loved his mother too, in the reckless prodigality that was his own; but she was more connected in his mind with "the way he should go," and with the punishments he accepted unmurmuring when he had been false to his resolutions and his creed. It was easier for Shirley to love the idol who had made his responsibilities so weighty than the person who reproved him when the burden was in a thoughtless moment laid aside for greater comfort in some escapade. She should have known, he thought, that the still, small voice repeating "Shirley Burr!" was greater punishment than any other she could devise, and quite sufficient. Indeed, his remorse when he felt himself unworthy to bear his

father's name was so poignant and unbearable that he would hide away as if from himself, and do penance unutterable in his solitude.

It was hard for him to understand why, with the best intentions in the world, he was so easily persuaded to things he should have left alone; but being perfectly honest with himself—a quality he had inherited from the woman who bore him—he knew that it was a weakness, and despised it. He knew, too, as he grew older, that the weakness became, paradoxically, stronger, partly because it had overcome his resolution so often, and partly because it had begun to eat into the very resolution itself.

In the time of his preparation for college he was more than ever with his father, who had undertaken, in an affable friendliness, to tutor him through these anxious months of extra work. The long straight-fingered hand had laid itself unexpectedly upon his discouraged shoulder, one morning at the beginning of this time, and the voice that was always listened to with such inexpressible delight inquired the trouble that had so cast him down. Being shown the page of baffling Latin, Shirley Burr, the elder, had drawn up a chair, and laughing a little, had gone slowly but effectively through the difficulty, bringing order out of chaos in a masterful way all the more remarkable for the inconsequent air with which he did it. He had then inquired in detail about the work, run his hands through his thick waving hair, and declared it too much. Then he laughed again, and said no Shirley Burr should enter college with a conditional welcome. From that day he had given up his morning hours to pushing the boy along.

Shirley's passionate adoration of his father gained some very practical points of admiration as they worked together. There was no impassable barrier of trigonometry or Greek that did not give way before his easeful onslaught, and sometimes when some long-forgotten passage of great beauty

leaped to his glowing eyes from the page, he would give the glad cry of a deep breath, and in his golden voice burst into its speaking as a song. Sometimes whole pages of his Homer came surging back from the long shores of oblivion. Then he would let the book go, fling back his glorious head, and give them voice. And Shirley would sit thrilled like a young novice with the sonorous words of some majestic prayer.

These days, usually the most irksome in a student's life, were made delightful in this fair companionship. And his mother, too, seemed happier, and looked upon them both as they came to her summons at luncheon hour with a deep and glad approval. They were in the country for the time, and whereas Burr had been in other years smitten with restlessness in these rustic surroundings, and, complaining that he could not work without the friction of the city surging about him, had gone back to their house in town for tedious absences, he was now apparently content to remain with them, giving the best and most of his time to his son.

When Shirley went in the fall to take his "finals," he was nerved almost to the point of hysteria with a hope of repaying the many hours of patient aid his father had given him by "passing" with a brave showing. When he wrote "Shirley Burr" upon his first examination paper his hand shook with the exultation of his desire. He went back, utterly spent, to await the coming of his "marks," and during that terrible period his father further endeared himself to the boy by giving him some purely mechanical work of a secretarial nature to fill the days. Shirley was certain that only his father knew enough not to make a fellow rest under such conditions, and to give him something of just this nature to drive him on.

The day came when the fruits of their labor were garnered, amid much well-repressed rejoicing. Shirley Burr should take his place with modest honors.

And there followed a succession of swift changes; the return to town, the trip to Boston, the half-pleasurable, half-tiresome fitting-up of college rooms, the slow, half-clumsy familiarizing of the fellow who was to share his quarters, the sudden change to the opening days of college, and the lonely adjustment to the new life.

Shirley went back to his rooms, after seeing his father and mother off in the dismal little Back Bay station, with mingled feelings of distress and agreeable anticipation. He felt lost in the press of many men, where no one had any particular interest in him, except his professional adviser, and yet there was a delight in being for the first time his own householder and guardian. Not that he had ever found his home confining, but still, this was the first step toward manly independence. As the car crossed the Harvard Bridge, the look of the river and the clustering lights wrought upon him like a moving bit of melody, and a tender-hearted mood possessed him. His father—his brilliant, glorious-minded, great-hearted, clean-spirited father, and the dear, sweet-eyed woman who was happy enough to be the wife of him—what would he not do to justify their pride, their love? What strong, honest, faithful work he would do—ah, for he was not brilliant as his father was and would never go by the royal road; but surely the other road led to the same place if one were only patient and steadfast. Let him look himself squarely in the face—he was not naturally unwavering in his intentions. He must begin at the very first, letting no fissure, however slight, mar the wall that was to shut out all alluring, time-eating, principle-destroying temptations. He remembered with a hot feeling in his face how his mother's eyes had looked at him when she had whispered hurriedly, "You must be father and mother to yourself now, Shirley. Try to do as you know that we would have you." She seemed a bit uneasy at leaving him, had cried a little, perhaps, he thought, because she had found out his inconstancy of

purpose, perhaps only because she was his mother. Heaven bless her! But, by the very honesty he had inherited from her, he knew it was the thought of his father which would always be his greatest strength, and he resolved, as the car plunged forward into the squalor of the Cambridge shore, to "begin that moment," as he expressed it, and to live his every day as if his father stood beside him.

When he reached his quarters he found his roommate entertaining a couple of friends—a very jolly three they were. They took quick compassion on his fairly solemn appearance, and believing him to be homesick—a most unmanly agony—welcomed him to his own home with a cordial ease. Buford, the roommate, introduced the friends, made room for him upon the couch, and mixed him a cheering high-ball. There was an immense comfort in lounging there, listening to the laughing jargon of the others, joining in it, sipping his drink with the air of a man of the world, and never giving a thought to irksome duties that the day would bring. The idea of going to see "The Grass Widows" had occurred to the trio too late to act upon it, and they referred to it so often after his arrival and with such evident regret that, acting partly upon the impulse of the exhilarated moment and partly upon the fervent advice of his father not to be mean with his money, he invited them all to go with him the night following. They accepted as one man, and looked upon him with increasing favor. Buford brought out his really extensive collection of photographs of actresses, perhaps the most attractive things in the eyes of even older boys than they, and the hours slipped by delightfully in the contemplation of various beauties, the criticisms of another's favorites, and the even distribution of the contents of the bottle on the table before them.

In the morning, what with his headache and new perplexing duties, he was sorry that he had invited them to the theatre that night; but magnifying his father's advice into an imperative

command to entertain his friends, he shifted the responsibility of the act, and after dinner at Memorial went back almost resigned to await the gathering of his party. Buford and Dexter came in together, after a little, absolutely in need of some stimulant before they started, and the third man joining them as they finished and insisting on being "treated" with due respect, they all drank to his health and he to theirs in the most thirsty way imaginable.

It was during this first half-hour of their reunion that Shirley decided they were the best fellows in the world, and that he wanted nothing better than to go with them to look over the famous twelve widows, and help them to a valuable decision as to the relative claims to beauty of that dozen of damsels.

At the first entrance in the first act of this galaxy of charm Buford leaned weakly upon Shirley's shoulder for support, and said almost too loudly: "By George, there's Winnie Carteret! She used to be in vaudeville. I met her at Manhattan Beach last year, and can't she dance!" They looked at him in envious admiration, which he delighted in. It gave him so expansive a feeling of importance and benignity that he offered to present them all, and he sent around his card.

Four years are a long time, as someone has said, to be a beggar, and a short time to be a millionaire. And Shirley Burr found it both a long and a short time to be at college. He had taken a course that contained no "cinches," and he found the work very hard and wearisome. It was at times like these that his mind turned most often to his father, and he found the necessary spur in the remembrance of his patient work with him during that first hard summer. But there were many other things that made the four years very short, cut into as they were by the long vacation, friendships, amusements, athletics. And there were, too, sometimes things

that brought him days of very savage regret and passionate disgust. In these moods he would rather not have thought about his father; but he did uncontrollably, and therefore scourged himself with no sparing rod that even so vital an appeal could not hold him from such indulgent weakness. It was simply the grown-up form of his old struggle, and as his "ignorances and wickednesses" became graver so, too, did his hours of remorse become more terrible. As time went on, a loathing of his own being would come upon him with a sickening force, so that he came to hate the very virtue in his honesty that made his faults so evident to him. He was no worse, he was wont to tell himself, than other men; it was only that he had a keener sense of the depths to which he sometimes fell. And then immediately his honesty would be up ablaze and he would say: "I am as weak as water." Once or twice he had thrown himself down upon his bed and suffered the pain which in a woman would have resulted in tears, when he remembered to what places he had dragged the fair high name with which his father had intrusted him.

But just as he had sworn to begin, that long past beginning night, to be strong and to keep to his standards of right and wrong, so now he told himself that he would start afresh when college closed for him; he would clean off the slate, shake off the companions and associations of his silly evilness, and go to his father with an honest confession and an invincible purpose. He would do it before then but that it was so impossible to break from all the people with whom his daily life was cast.

Toward the end of the last year, busy as the days were, Buford and Dexter and the others planned more and more good times, and had enough farewell sprees to say good-bye to a regiment, man by man. There were frequent suppers, too, Buford and Shirley settling the bill between them, as they were always the most generously supplied with money. At these

suppers there would be a girl, or two, or three, merry, pretty, good-natured, in spite of the fact that their arduous choruses at the play were just over.

There was one of these girls in particular—he had known her for two weeks. She was a remarkably attractive little creature, whose picture, in insufficient drapery, was constantly appearing in cheap magazines, and whose only claim to intellectuality was that she knew enough to keep rather silent and excel at listening. The honest side of Shirley Burr could not deceive himself with the idea that her charm for him was of a very high or justifiable order; and once, when forcing an unwelcome appearance upon the less admirable Shirley, it had whispered to him, "What would your father think of her?" the boy had shuddered and turned sick at heart. But still she kept her pretty, iron hold of him, caring nothing for him, but for what he gave her. Indeed, she mostly laughed at him openly in an unexplaining, mysterious way that rather fascinated him. When she learned that he was going back to New York as soon as he received his diploma, without waiting for all the festivities of graduation week, as his mother was too ill to attend, she expressed a selfish pleasure in the plan since she, too, would be in that city then. It made her laugh just to think of it.

Shirley was really sorry for this. He thought it over in his odd, honest way that night when he was alone; thought how deeply entangled he had become in her tinsel snares, and wondered if he were going to have the strength to free himself. He was still thinking of it in an incoherent kind of way, pulling off a boot dejectedly as he sat on the edge of his bed, when Buford came in, preternaturally solemn and extravagantly wise.

"Hurly-Burly, I'm a good friend of yours, am I not?" he inquired, steadying himself with due caution at the door.

"Sure thing," responded Shirley, dropping the boot with a large uncon-

cern in things temporal. "What can I do for you?"

"You can take my advice," said Buford, keeping a superfluous sibilance from his speech by a supreme effort. "You take my advice and cut out Estella Harper. Oh, I know it's none of my business, and I'm a meddlesome fool, *et cetera*. But never mind all that. You take my advice and go in for somebody-who'll care for you—some noble, beautiful girl," he suggested, the tears almost standing in his eyes at this poetic idea, "who'll care for you. Estella would let you be hanged if the rope would turn into a string of pearls afterward. She's not disinterested." The word was confusingly full of s's, and he paused, wondering exactly how many there were.

Shirley himself was disposed to be in a melting mood. But he overcame a desire to pour his heart out in one superb confession of his love. He merely shook his head sadly at the rug and muttered that he couldn't help it.

"You're a splendid fellow, Hurly-Burly," went on his friend, making affectionate if somewhat majestic gestures with the hand not occupied in supporting himself at the door. "You're one of the finest chaps that ever lived. Yes, you are. Yes, you are. Don't say you're not. Don't deny it. You know you are. She's a peachy little thing, but it's all grist that comes to her mill, and she's had hundreds of fellows being just as good to her as you are now. She's been—" He tried to say promiscuous, but failed. Shirley understood him.

"I shall be obliged to thrash you, Buford, if you say anything against Miss Harper's character," he retorted very heavily, trying to pull off the other boot, which had not been unlaced.

"Don't threaten me, sir," said Buford angrily, but his mood melted again to one of moist regard. "Old chap, brace up. I don't need to tell you about her. All I am saying is, don't fall in love with her seriously, understand? She's one of the most charming

and widely advertised young women on the stage, and her photographs are not spread around for any philanthropic reasons."

"Don't rub it in," begged Shirley, lying down miserably, with the boot still on. "I know all about it. I'm no better than anybody else."

"That's all right," replied his chum encouragingly. "That doesn't matter at all. Only don't get to really caring for her, will you, now? Promise me on the honor of a gentleman?"

In the morning his still, small voice repeating monotonously, "Shirley Burr, your father's son, Shirley Burr," awoke him. He was lying in his dress clothes, though without his coat, a boot still on one foot, and a mental as well as physical depression upon him that no words could gauge. When, with a great effort, he had risen and undressed and bathed, he lay down again in his bath-robe, his hands clasped over his throbbing, aching eyes. He lay there for hours, chastising his spirit in the unmercifully honest way he had and by which he never profited.

"Weak as water—drinking, idling, woman-hunting fool—Shirley Burr—good God!"

By noon Buford, too, had struggled up and made a little coffee over an alcohol lamp. They drank it in sullen silence and went about their neglected duties and recitations with weary headaches.

Shirley had by no means forgotten the long-projected cleaning of the slate when he arrived at home a couple of weeks later, toward the end of June. He had thought about it all the way over in the train and had made many plans for the future. Why hadn't he been given his father's strength of character as well as his ideals?

It was nearly dinner-time when he reached the house, but there seemed to be no preparations going on in the dining-room as he passed. He went quietly up the stairs to his mother's room, knocked softly and entered. She was expecting him, of course, happy and almost bright with her pleasure. It was only a bad throat

and a cold. He was to have his dinner in her room with her, because his father was going out. She raised her voice a little and called. The door of his father's room, adjoining hers, opened immediately and his father, most glowingly handsome in his evening clothes, came toward him, hands outstretched and eyes alight. Ah, how good it was to be at home again!

His father, his delicate, fine face beaming with his welcome, explained his helplessness in his outgoing. It was a dinner at which he had consented to speak, rather an important political affair, but a beastly nuisance when one's only son was coming home from college. His radiance faded into a look of anxiety when he saw Shirley's face in a better light. The boy looked utterly fagged. Working too hard? It didn't pay, it didn't pay.

Shirley almost turned away from the kindly scrutiny. If ever a man endured his punishment, he did then in listening to their gentle, anxious questions. He managed to turn their thoughts upon his father's speech, watching with proud delight as Shirley Burr, the elder, delivered a part of it for their benefit, witty and pungent as it was. God in heaven keep him from bringing disgrace upon this radiant creature!

"That ought to fetch them, eh?" said Burr, his delicate hand caressing the soft braid of his wife's hair, that lay across the pillow. "I'm doing a series of articles, Shirley, about the mines of the country. They want me to infuse a little poetry and romance into it, they said. Fancy such a *bêtise*—as if there wasn't more poetry in the subject than in all my imagination. But for two hundred dollars a mine!" He laughed and shrugged his shoulders. "Shall you be up when I come in, boy? I want to have a chat with you about college and things, and tomorrow is always so far away. Well, I must go." He kissed his wife gently on the cheek, his wonderful face pressing against her own tenderly, then turned to his son. "They won't let me kiss her on the lips," he said, with

a child's wistfulness. "Be good to her while I am away."

For the week that followed his return to his home Shirley's life apparently went on serenely. But though only he knew it, he was nerving himself with an unceasing strain against the near day when Estella should write to him to come to her. He knew himself well enough to be sure that it was impossible to tell by their thickness how strong were the walls he built about himself, and so, though day after day went by, he did not cheat himself with the idea that this made his victory the more secure. He had put aside a temptation to tell either his father or his mother of his entanglement and many follies, knowing that their strength would lustily be given to aid him in his need. He had put it aside because he thought it cowardly to make them suffer the knowledge of his abominable weaknesses in order to support his desire to overcome them, and because—ah, very much because—it was not a pretty thing to tell. He pictured his mother's brave grief and disappointment, and it seemed that shame struck his bare soul with a cruel hand. But even that, he knew in his heart, would not bring him as great an agony of self-despise as the shrinking of his father's sensitive spirit of beauty. He should be ever after to his father a hideous deformity, an ugly thing, something that clear, proud voice could never speak of, the voice whose tones had reveled in the pure music of an old Greek page.

No, no—that could not be! He would do his dirty work alone. When Estella wrote him that she was in town and wanted him, he would reply only by letter, explaining that he could not and would never come again. She had given him—it burned in his pocket now like a stolen thing—a key to her apartment, a sordid, hateful insignia of their intimacy. He dreaded having to inclose this vulgar evidence of her frailty and his in the letter he must send her. And yet he was fearful lest he might lose the thing, and so

become in her eyes guilty of keeping it.

Her letter came finally, three dashing words to the little sweet-smelling page, and it found him strong with the power of the ties about him. The very sprawl of her writing gave him courage, laying it as he did beside a sheet of his father's exquisite manuscript as he sat at his deserted desk to answer it. He wrote her as manfully as the situation permitted, begging her forgiveness in all sincerity for the caddish part he seemed to play, and for all that he had done. But when it came to the dreaded question of the key, it seemed so brutal a thing to fling at her that he thrust it back into his pocket with a groan. Knowing well that he might hesitate when the thought of her persistently assailed him, he posted his reply at once and went to sit beside his mother, hoping that her presence might keep all unworthy waverings of intention from him. He added another power to the influence by talking to her at length about his father, about his Shirley Burr.

He told her about his childish adoration of the rare, fine spirit, his pride in the place his father held among the most brilliant men of the country, his feeling of responsibility about the famous name.

She listened quietly, her eyes never leaving his face.

He told her how his early ideas of God had been founded upon the appearance of his father, how from the very first his measure of right and wrong had been "what father would do," how all his foundations and principles were built upon this man. And he told her too, how, when he lapsed from duty and was not doing as he should, his greatest pain was in the thought of how his father would despise him if he knew.

When he finished speaking she drew a deep, long breath, and closing her fingers on his own with a tender pressure, said quiveringly: "I love him too."

He went with her the next day, at her suggestion, to the little mountain

resort where she was to spend a week or two. He went gladly, eagerly, having a driven feeling in his heart that it would be better if he could get away.

But if he had hoped to get away from his own weakness by putting miles between him and the object of his dear desire he was as mistaken as many another man has been. And that it was so, before two days had gone he knew as sure as his plain-dealing second self could make him. He had run away like a coward. And now, like a coward, he was struggling with the pitiful desire to go back. By what vile transmutation had his father's blood within his veins become such milk and water!

But it was so easy to go—a mere day in town. He could surely find her somewhere, somehow. She would be angry, perhaps; perhaps she would only laugh. All day the temptation explained its feasibility to him, until his spirit of resistance was crushed beneath the force of its logic. With eyes turned away from what he did, he made excuses to his mother and went to town. Under the whip of his passion for the girl even the forbidding vision of his father's pale, fine face could not deter him. He went to her only the faster that in her presence he could obliterate the great, reproachful eyes that haunted him. He went to her as some men, too weak to make their fight, go to their unsanctified deaths with an unholy urgency. He had planned to call up her apartment on the telephone, to see if she were alone and would see him. But when he reached the city, overwrought by impatience during the tedious journey, he simply jumped into a cab and was driven to the place. What if she were not alone? He knew he could face the possibility. He wanted only to see her for a moment, to ask her forgiveness for imagining he could exist without her, to beg her to tell him when he might come again. It became a pounding phrase in his head, with the beating of his heart and the noise of the horse's feet—he wanted to see her only for a moment. And he

said it over so many times that it bewildered him, like a kind of delirium.

Had he had any difficulty in finding her door it might have aroused him; but he found himself before it without any conscious effort, and simply and insanely he put his key into the lock and entered. Fairly drunk with his eagerness to see her he sought her out in the rooms within, and came upon her so suddenly that it nearly forced a cry from him, expectant though he had been of finding her. She was very startled by his sudden appearance. She drew a deep breath, and then in her mysterious way began to laugh at him silently. She was dressed for going out and she seemed to be waiting for someone.

Neither of them spoke; to be with her, to look at her, was what he wanted; and she seemed to find sufficient amusement in the situation without any explanation or comment. With the sound of an opening door somewhere in the further rooms of the place her dainty merriment ended. Her face grew grave at once. She pushed him back suddenly into a window where the curtains would conceal him.

"I can't lose you both, you're such dears," she whispered, almost laughing again.

He was about to protest at being made to hide himself, when the newcomer, entering the room, crossed the constricted line of his vision. It was Shirley Burr.

And while the younger man stood in that cramped little Judas-cabinet, the world came curiously to a silent, quiet end, not at all with the noise and fuss that he had been taught as a child would attend the consummation of that last catastrophe. The earth fell away from beneath his feet, the heaven passed away from above his head. Everything to which he had held as sacred and eternal crumbled away in his fingers.

He saw the long, straight-fingered hands tilt up the woman's chin. He watched with the hideous calm of a vivisectionist the wonderful face press

tenderly against hers as he kissed her. Then the tall figure, always at ease, went with her to the door and led her out, and the deep, sweet voice asked her why she looked back when he was by. Then the outer door closed upon them and they were gone.

And Shirley Burr, the son, pitched forward upon the floor with a sob, and there remained, alone with his strange, dreadful prayers. For the Mountain of Disillusion is hard by the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and few there be who go by either road and are unafraid.

And yet it was from that mountain-top that he saw, through his burning tears, the way that led to a better country than he had ever known. It was for him to take the sad, void space, and therein to create a new heaven and a new earth, not only for himself but for the dear, sweet-eyed woman who had lied and lied and hidden the truth away from him in her own torn heart. Now he could read the look in her anxious eyes that he had seen and never understood. He would never see it there again, please God.

He knew a birth within him stronger than himself. No puny and unfixable resolve, but the cruel revelation of her need of him girded his loins and sent him out upon his way. As the once blind rejoice in their sight, the once halt delight in their straightened limbs, so he who had been weak gloried in his new strength.

A calm, that brooded like a great white bird above a nest, entered him. The last unworthy fragments of the old world fell unheeded from the hands that had so madly tried to save them. He stood upon his feet, a man new-born, child of a larger race. For by the strange convulsion of this Doomsday had the weak waters of his soul been flung together and become a sea.

And when he went away as he had come, and reached her side again, she saw a new soul shining in his face. But when she questioned him, he took her in his arms and held his peace.

NEPENTHE

I DRINK to red-lipped Circe of the Vine,
 Whose kisses crush the memory of care,
 And in whose fluent smile, half seen, there shine—
 Changed now to pearls—the teardrops of despair.

I take her hand—and lo! the hand is Fame's!
 She speaks—and wisdom wings her lightest breath;
 She is the memory of the many names,
 And in her heart is ignorance of death.

But best of all, her lips, when pressed to mine,
 Become the lips that I have sought in vain,
 And in the easy kisses of the wine
 I find the kisses I could never gain.

REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN.



A MARRIAGE OF SOULS

THERE was once a literary man who married a woman of similar bent. And everybody said, "What an ideal union! This is indeed a true marriage of souls!"

The man and woman were of the same opinion, and during the first few weeks of wedded bliss they never lost an opportunity to tell their friends and each other how perfectly delightful and congenial it is for husband and wife to follow the same pursuit.

The honeymoon over, they resumed their literary labors.

"Listen," said the woman to the man at the end of the first day's work, "and tell me what you think of this story I have just completed."

And she proceeded to read it to him. Once or twice the man stifled a yawn, and at the end he casually remarked, "It isn't bad stuff. But"—and here his eyes sparkled—"let me read you this poem I have written."

The woman, angered at the lukewarm praise he had vouchsafed her, retaliated by criticizing the metre of his verse.

Before the year was out they had applied for a divorce on the grounds of incompatibility of temper.

The man married a woman who could not have told iambic metre from an ichthyosaurus, but she doted on men who "wrote things."

The woman wedded a retired pork-sausage manufacturer who was endeavoring to surround himself with culture.

And they all lived happy ever after.

BLANCHE GOODMAN.



THE GRAFTERS

By Ellis Parker Butler

ATTORNEY TOOLE was a legal light of Willington; he was, in fact, the legalest and lightest of the entire Willing County Bar. He smiled habitually, not because he thought a smile becoming to his freckled face, but because he found things so eternally amusing. In law a man is considered innocent until he has been proved guilty; in Willington Attorney Toole considered everything a joke until it was proved serious. He considered it a joke that he had been admitted to the Bar; he considered every trial case he received a joke, and it usually turned out to be a joke on his client.

Attorney Toole's specialty was collections. He could wheedle or bluff money out of the deadest beat that ever expired financially. That was how Widow Morgan came to apply to him. Let us take up the case of Widow Morgan carefully, since it was the contents of the box in her second-floor front that wrecked the Citizen's Party in Willington.

The party of the first part, Widow Morgan, was the keeper of a high-class ice-water and weak-coffee boarding-house in the town of Willington. To her, on a certain day and date, came William Briggs, the party of the second part, and applied for the said ice water and weak coffee and other board and lodging, agreeing to pay four dollars a week therefor. But this said William Briggs, being a book agent, lightning-rod agent, patent medicine peddler and other transient things, did, at the end of four weeks, jump his board bill and mysteriously disappear, leaving only a note which said:

DEAR MRS. MORGAN: I'm off. Good-bye. Business is burn. Sorry I can't square up,

but I leave you the box in my room in part payment.

Having done this, the said William Briggs passed out of Willington and out of this narrative. And good riddance, for he was a slangy young gent.

Every pleasant evening for many years a gentleman of Willington had dropped in to see Widow Morgan. This was Colonel Guthrie. He was a fine old gentleman, with brave mustaches and a valiant goatee and deep-set eyes. Standing six-feet-two in his boots, he was a fine type of the thin but impressive military man. He came by his title honestly; he had been a sergeant in the Civil War. Being a widower, he had a perfect right to court the Widow Morgan. He made no secret of it. Everyone in Willington knew that he was courting her, and one and all respected him for it and refused to interfere—with one exception. Nathaniel Grubb, butcher and capitalist, wrapped love and affection into every roast of beef and round steak he sent to the widow. Just when he ceased to look upon the widow as a mere customer and began to consider her as a possible Mrs. Grubb cannot be stated—probably it was about the time he decided to build Grubb's Opera House.

The colonel scorned Grubb. As a gentleman farmer in reduced circumstances he looked upon Grubb as a beefy, puffy moneybag. Grubb himself knew he was all that, but he knew that he was a public benefactor, too, for he was giving Willington an opera house, a thing no other man had been foolish enough to do, and trusting to this glory he entered the field against the colonel. The widow received him coldly, and complained of the tough-

ness of his steak. When he called and spoke meaningfully of his love state, the widow assured him that the last leg of lamb she had received from him was not as good as the one before.

Colonel Guthrie lived with his daughter, and every evening his daughter tied his white neck-bow for him, kissed him affectionately, told him how handsome he was, and watched him walking toward the widow's boarding-house. She wished her father to be happy; she liked the widow, and her own wedding was being postponed from year to year in order that she might not leave her father helpless and unwomaned. She was engaged to Attorney Toole.

It was but natural that in ten or a dozen years of slow courtship the widow and the colonel should exhaust most topics of conversation, and the decamping of William Briggs was welcomed by them both as a fertile subject. Mrs. Morgan detailed the entire transaction. She repeated what he had said to her and what she had said to him, and what he did and what she did. The colonel listened attentively and remarked from time to time, "Tut, tut!" and "Well, now!" with great feeling.

"But have I the right to open that box?" she asked. "Is it mine? If I open it, can he come back and sue me—or anything?"

"Ah!" said the colonel impressively. "Can he? That is the question. Can he?"

"It is a large box," said the widow.

"A large box!" repeated the colonel gravely. "Of course, if it was only a small box— But it is a large box! How large?"

"Quite large. About medium large. Not too large. Beside anything very large it would be small; but beside anything very small it would be large." The widow looked at him appealingly. She longed for advice.

The colonel nodded his head in a sympathetic manner.

"I know!" he said. "I know! Medium large. I have seen such boxes."

He rested his forehead on his cane and thought. He was very dignified so. Suddenly he lifted his head.

"Is it a heavy box?" he asked with great interest.

The widow waved her hands in the air.

"Medium!" she said. "Just medium heavy."

The colonel shook his head and looked dejected.

"Medium!" he murmured. "A medium-sized, medium-heavy box!"

He lapsed into thought. If it had been a small, light box he would have known what to advise. He would have told her to open it and appropriate its contents. If it had been a very large, very heavy box he would have advised her to leave it alone. But a medium box was an indefinite thing. It suggested unlimited legal complications.

"I would like to help you," he said. "My advice is always at your service, madam, as you know, but a medium box—I advise legal counsel. Do not touch the box. Do not open it except in the presence of the law."

The advice sounded good. In the colonel's deep voice it seemed impressively correct. The widow almost shuddered as she thought how near she had come to taking the kindling-wood hatchet and knocking off the lid of the box.

The colonel cleared his throat.

"My daughter," he said slowly, "is, I may say, in close touch with Attorney Toole. I may say they are close friends, if not more. I presume," he paused impressively, "I presume I could persuade Attorney Toole to advise us."

The widow clasped her hands with pleasure, combining a pretty, imploring gesture.

"Could you?" she exclaimed. "If you could!"

"For you, madam," said the colonel, with a bow, "I would do far more."

Attorney Toole, when the colonel called at his office the next day, listened to the circumstances of the box with his inscrutable smile.

"Tis a very serious case," he said.

"So I told that estimable person, Mrs. Morgan," said the colonel.

"But I'll undertake it," said Toole, "for friendship. Only for friendship. I would not take a case for money involving a medium-sized box. But as you are my friend—" He smiled upon the colonel meaningly.

"A medium-sized box," he added, "should only be opened in the presence of an attorney-at-law. That," he said, "is legal advice, and is worth five dollars. I charge you nothing for it, being your friend. Consider it a gift from me to you."

"I appreciate it, sir," said the colonel.

"And now," said the lawyer briskly, "for the *modus operandi*, as we lawyers say. Has the lady a hatchet?"

The colonel thought.

"I do not know," he said at length, after he had carefully searched his brain. "But I will bring a hatchet."

"Good!" exclaimed Attorney Toole. "That's better yet. A medium-sized box left by a transient in payment of default of a board bill should always be opened, if possible, with a hatchet not the property of the plaintiff. Chitty says that."

He took from his desk a bulky volume and ran over the pages rapidly.

"Box," he said, "small box—medium box. Here it is. Humph!"

The colonel leaned over the book, but the attorney closed it quickly.

"Bring an axe," he said. "A hatchet would do, but an axe is more legal. Hatchets for small boxes; axes for medium boxes."

"I will bring an axe," said the colonel pompously.

"Be at the house at eight this evening," said the attorney.

The colonel said he would. He bowed to the attorney and passed out. He felt pleasantly businesslike.

"Now, some folks," said Attorney Toole, "wouldn't get any fun at all out of such a case as this. I do. That's why I keep so young."

It was true. He kept almost childishly young. People noticed it.

It was an impressive scene when, by the light of a squatty kerosene lamp with a red wick, the widow, the colonel and the attorney gathered in the sec-

ond-floor front to open the medium-sized box. A look of grim determination rested on the colonel's face; the widow was grimly remorseless; Attorney Toole smiled knowingly.

"Knock off the lid!" he said firmly. The colonel raised the axe and struck. The board splintered but remained firm.

"Legally," said the attorney, "you may strike three blows."

At the third blow a portion of the lid fell clattering to the floor, and the widow, the colonel and the attorney peered anxiously into the box.

From it the colonel tenderly lifted a nickel-plated cylinder as tall as a man's knee and as large around as a leg of mutton. It had a convex top and on one side a dial. From near the base a long rubber tube extended.

The colonel handled it gently. He held it in his hands as an old bachelor holds his new-born nephew. The widow looked into his face, appealing for enlightenment. The colonel carefully studied the object in his hands. He looked into the box again, and back at the glittering object in his hands. There were three more, exactly like it, in the box.

"What is it?" asked the widow nervously.

The gingerly manner in which the colonel handled it aroused her suspicions. She backed away from it.

"Don't you know what it is?" she asked anxiously.

"Yes," said the colonel, "oh, yes! But I can't imagine what that young man was doing with them, with four of them. Perhaps," he added, "he was agent for them."

"He was agent for 'most everything," said the widow. "But what are they?"

"Madam," said the colonel, "they are fire-extinguishers; chemical fire-extinguishers. I recall having seen some once when I attended a theatre at Jefferson. They are used to extinguish fires."

"Well!" exclaimed the widow. "And how in the world do they work?"

The colonel turned the nickel-plated object over and over.

"That, madam," he said slowly, "I cannot say. If I study them closely a few days no doubt I can discover how they work. At present I am in the dark."

"And what, pray," she asked, "am I to do with four fire-extinguishers?"

She asked the question as if she held the colonel responsible, and he accepted the responsibility gladly.

"That I must decide," he said grandly. "I must consider. No doubt," he added, "they are of far more value than the amount of your bill against this fellow Briggs. First, however, I will ask my legal friend here if we have a perfect right to dispose of these fire-extinguishers?"

"You have," exclaimed Attorney Toole joyously. "Every right in the world. You can sell, give, donate or bequeath them, for better, for worse, till death you do part."

"Then all is well," said the colonel.

"Except," said Attorney Toole to himself, "that those are first-class nickel-plated lung-testers, and not fire-extinguishers. But that doesn't matter. In fact, the demand for lung-testers is on a par with the demand for fire-extinguishers in Willington. Now, some people wouldn't get any fun out of this, but I do. I enjoy it."

During the next few days the colonel thought deeply. He considered a hundred different methods of disposing of the supposed fire-extinguishers. He thought of having a raffle; but no one would buy chances on a fire-extinguisher. He thought of taking them down to Jefferson; but the possibility of selling them after he got there seemed doubtful.

It was when he was standing before the incompleated Grubb's Opera House that the practical solution came to him. He would sell them to Grubb. Grubb's Opera House needed fire-extinguishers. The safety of the people of Willington demanded fire-extinguishers in Grubb's Opera House. He went to Mr. Grubb. He offered the fire-extinguishers to Mr. Grubb at ten dollars each.

Mr. Grubb was trimming a roast. He had just cut off a piece of suet, which he held in his hand as he listened. When the colonel had, too haughtily, perhaps, explained the object of his call, Mr. Grubb held the lump of suet offensively near the nose of the colonel.

"Fire-extinguishers!" he laughed. "Me buy fire-extinguishers? I wouldn't give *that* for them."

He shook the suet before the colonel's eyes.

"No, sir!" continued Mr. Grubb. "I wouldn't give *that* for them. And I throw that away!"

"Sir!" exclaimed the colonel, growing dangerously red, "you are a low-bred—a low-bred beef-chopper!"

"Mebby," admitted Mr. Grubb indifferently; "but I don't buy no fire-extinguishers, nor lightning-rods. No."

When the colonel reported his ill success to the widow that evening he was astounded to find that she sympathized with Mr. Grubb in his refusal.

"I don't wonder," she said. "He's put so much money into that opera house already. He's done enough for the town. He's been a very public-spirited citizen. And to think he made it all out of selling meat! It must be a good business."

The colonel glowered at the lung-tester that stood on the parlor table, and an hour later went home disheartened. The widow had almost openly rebuffed him and had praised Grubb.

Early the next morning he dropped into the office of Attorney Toole, and as that young man lay back in his chair, with his feet on his desk, the colonel told him the whole story. The attorney smiled.

"After that," he said, "you ought to make him buy them."

"Gad, sir!" exclaimed the colonel. "If I only could!"

"Colonel," said Attorney Toole, "I see you hesitate to force him. The feeling does you honor, but it isn't business. You hesitate even when you see how easily you can force him to do what he should do to protect the

lives of our trustful citizens. I admire you."

The colonel coughed. He felt that the admiration was his due, but he did not see exactly why.

"You," said Attorney Toole, "knowing that our town council can pass an ordinance compelling all owners of opera houses to install nickel-plated fire-extinguishers—to install four of them—for the protection of our people, hesitate to ask them to pass such an ordinance. You hesitate because you do not wish to appear malevolent toward a rival. Now, don't you?"

The colonel coughed again. Attorney Toole lowered his feet to the floor and slapped his desk with the flat of his hand.

"And I," he shouted, "beg you not to hesitate! I beg you to act! I beg you to think of the lives of the poor, helpless women and children. I beg you for humanity's sake to go to the honorable mayor and city council and appeal to them to pass an ordinance compelling this Grubb to buy nickel-plated fire-extinguishers. To compel him, sir!"

He shuffled the legal-looking documents that littered his desk.

"What have we come to," he asked sadly, "when our leading citizens thus neglect their duty? Will you neglect your duty? Will you forswear your plain duty to the star-spangled banner, for which you once fought and, if I am not in error, bled?"

"No," said the colonel gravely.

"Good!" exclaimed Attorney Toole. "Then there is one true citizen left in Willington." And he smiled again.

It is to the colonel's credit that he did not delay when he saw his duty to the women and children of Willington. He went at once to the mayor, the honest, upright shoemaker, Johann Stitz, and laid the case before him.

Johann Stitz and the city council had been elected on a citizens' ticket. They were, therefore, free and independent. They owed allegiance to no political party, and they chafed and worried because they were so inde-

pendent. Their independence made their work more difficult; it compelled them to decide things for themselves. As Democrats they would, for example, have promptly refused to saddle an expense on the Democratic Mr. Grubb; as Republicans they would, with equal promptness, have done whatever the Republican colonel requested; as citizen-tickers they had found all such questions most difficult of decision, and the burden had largely fallen on Mayor Johann Stitz. The council basely unshouldered the burden upon him. "Ask Stitz," they said. "He's mayor. What he says, we'll do." And Stitz would never say.

As the colonel entered the shoe-shop the mayor was reading a magazine, which he laid beside him while he listened to the colonel. A pile of similar magazines lay on the floor at his side. They were the missionary offerings of an enthusiastic female who had labored for the success of the citizens' ticket. They were magazines telling of the municipal corruption of "New York, the Vile," "Philadelphia, the Defiled but Happy," "Chicago, the Base," and "St. Louis, the Decayed." They had been given to Mayor Johann Stitz to show him the evil of graft and to keep his administration clean and pure.

When the mayor heard the colonel's request he beamed on him through his iron-rimmed spectacles.

"Ho! ho-o!" he exclaimed, "it is to make Herr Grubb buy some fire-extinguishables, yes? So shall my city council pass an ordinance, yes? Um!"

He smiled broadly at the colonel, and then nodded.

"For how much you graft me?" he asked blandly.

"What?" asked the colonel.

"Graft me," repeated Mayor Stitz.

"I says, for how much you graft me when I pass one such ordinance my council through?"

"What's that?" asked the colonel, puzzled.

"For how much you make me one

graft?" Mayor Stitz repeated slowly. "Graft! Graft! Understand him not?"

The colonel shook his head.

"What is it?" he inquired politely.

"Graft!" said the mayor. "Don't you know him? When I make you one ordinance, so, then you make me one graft, so! Like I read in this books. Me to you, one ordinance; you to me, one graft. Sol!"

The colonel did not understand. His face showed it. A crease wrinkled the brow of Mayor Johann Stitz.

"Here in this books," he said slowly and distinctly, "I read me of this grafts. It is to me this graft comes. So is it by all big cities. Man would to have one ordinance. Goot! Then gives man to the boss grafter a graft. Sol! Then gets the boss grafter one ordinance made like is wanted. Yes! No graft, no ordinance! Some graft, some ordinance! I read him in this books. It is a goot way. I likes me that graft business."

A glimmering of the meaning entered the colonel's mind, but he could hardly connect the idea of bribery with the honest Johann Stitz. As a fact, to Mayor Stitz the idea of unlawful gain did not come. Graft was a way out of the difficulty of having to decide things. It was a system authorized by the lawmakers of great cities, and a system that could operate in Willington. To them that grafted should be given. The colonel frowned.

"And what—how much must this graft be?" he asked coldly.

Mayor Stitz smiled blandly again.

"That makes not!" he exclaimed. "It is what you will to graft me. One bushel apples—two bushel apples—that must you say."

The colonel thought of the widow. He thought of the fire-extinguishers.

"I will make you a present of a bushel of apples," he said.

To his amazement the mayor laid down his magazine and arose.

"Well," the colonel inquired, "will you pass the ordinance?"

The mayor looked at him in surprise.

"First must I go by Herr Grubb,"

he said. "Mebby so he graft me more. I know not."

"Look here!" said the colonel in alarm, "I don't want you to do that."

"Well," said the mayor, "still must I do it! So always does the boss grafter. Which side grafts him much, so he goes. It is never different. To the muchest graft, so goes he. I read it in this books."

The mayor was obdurate. He would not budge from the high principle of graft. The most the colonel could obtain was a promise that no names should be mentioned. He seated himself on the cobbler's bench and awaited the mayor's return. The mayor returned radiant. He was rubbing his hands.

"Nice!" he exclaimed. "Nice! I make me one great boss grafter yet. Herr Grubb grafts me one roast beef and six pigs' feet. He would not no fire-extinguishables have."

The colonel looked the mayor squarely in the eye.

"Stitz," he said, "I will not run an auction bargain with that Grubb. I came to you first. It is your duty to pass that ordinance anyway. I scorn to bribe you. But to end the matter here and now I'll do this: if you will agree to pass the ordinance compelling Grubb to buy the four nickel-plated fire-extinguishers now owned by Mrs. Morgan at the price of twenty-five dollars each, I will graft you to four bushels of Benoni apples, two bushels of Early Rose potatoes, four bunches of celery, a peck of peas and one spring chicken. And if you won't"—he paused and raised his hand threateningly—"I'll go to the five councilmen and I'll graft them individually, and you can't help yourself."

The mayor's eyes sparkled.

"Say," he cried, "ain't I a boss grafter? Apples, potatoes, celery, peas and chickens! Five grafts to one ordinance! I do it!"

He did. At the next meeting of the city council the ordinance was unanimously passed, and the chastened Grubb humbly sought the widow and carried off the four lung-testers, which were

properly installed on little wooden brackets in different parts of Grubb's Opera House, and the widow, in the fulness of her heart and pocketbook, agreed to marry the colonel. Less than a month later Attorney Toole, smiling, married the colonel's daughter.

It was not until an agent for a real fire-extinguisher came to Willington that the scandal of the graft became known, and Attorney Toole, as a member of one of the regular political parties, was elected city attorney. For reasons of his own he did not push the charge of graft against Mayor Stitz. He let it drop after an interview with that boss grafter.

That interview must have been a great joy to Attorney Toole. He saw the fun of things. Among other things the interview managed, in some way, to alter Mayor Stitz's opinion of himself, for one day, when the colonel had taken his wife's shoes to be half-soled, the ex-mayor said:

"When I am ever mayor once more I makes no such fool mistakes. I makes me a real boss grafter. It is to laugh when I thinks how I took me for a grafter and wasn't. No!"

He chuckled over the shoe he held between his knees.

"So is it that Attorney Toole makes no prosecutions of me. I'm no grafter. Like so," he said, pointing his awl at the colonel; "money is graft, and houses and lots is graft, and horses is graft, and buggies. *But*"—and he paused impressively—"apples isn't, and potatoes isn't, and celery isn't, and peas isn't, and chickens isn't. Nothing to eat is grafts. Man can't eat grafts. If it is to eat it is not grafts. So says Attorney Toole. Things to eat is no more grafts, says Attorney Toole, than lung-testers is fire-extinguishables."

At which the colonel's back stiffened and he walked out of the cobbler's shop.



MAKING GOOD USE OF IT

MISTRESS (to colored laundress)—Eliza, I cannot understand how you could tear such a large hole in my new white skirt.

ELIZA—It ain't me what's done it, Mis' Tomkins, honey. It was dat good fer nothin' nigger, Washington Bobbs. He done put his big foot fro' it when he was dancin' the two-step with me at the 'mancipation ball Saturday night.



THE WAY OF A WOMAN

CRAWFORD—Does your wife always consult you?

CRABSHAW—After a fashion. Whenever she wants anything she orders it first and then asks me if she can have it.



"**H**OW long did it take McFudge to break into the Newport set?"

"Three mergers, one wheat corner and a trip to London."

NOCTURNE

IN this fair garden of the South,
 Alone, my fancy ever goes
 Northward again unto your mouth
 To find a rose.

Melodious the vines with birds,
 Yet all the sunny day I long
 For one delicious voice whose words
 Can shape my song.

And to the tranquil night's blue skies
 I look out through the lattice bars,
 Trying to find two tender eyes—
 Love's only stars.

So, sweetheart, all about me seems
 Unreal, yet it all were true
 Could but my heart hold of my dreams
 The dearest—you.

FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN.



DROPPING LETTERS

PRINCEVARD—That English girl has a way of dropping her eyes when she talks.

MISS VASSAR—You mean her h's, do you not?



AN UNKIND INSINUATION

ELLA—I wish I knew of some remedy for insomnia.

STELLA—Why don't you try counting until you get up to your age?



WE attain notoriety by seeking it; fame comes to us unsought.

TRYST

By Emma Wolf

SHE locked the door softly behind her, turning the knob again to make sure it was fast. Both stealth and courage were in her deliberation. She was glad of the reprieve, and afraid of it; glad Christopher had left early so that she might get "the beauty sleep she did not need" against the morrow's excitement; afraid lest, in this last moment of leisure love had thrust upon her, she might do that against which she had so valiantly struggled. She was afraid to be alone and idle.

Everything had been thought of and done, everything down to the minutest order for her father's comfort during her absence. Even now she turned desperately and walked with busy step to her trunk. She lifted the lid and looked down upon the bridal array with puckered brow. No, there was nothing to do; everything was there and she glanced fruitlessly about the room—everything was ready. She stood frustrated.

Yet surely it was the natural thing to do; only the very shortest kind of note "in memory of." It could harm no one, and it would mean so much to her.

"It will be just good-bye—and finished," she pleaded with her conscience. "As though I had shut the door upon him forever—but gently. I must. One likes to finish—gently. It is only fair to one's conscience."

She moved to the writing-table and sat down, her hand wavering toward the paper. But, having touched it, she drew a sheet toward her with no uncertain movement and dipped her pen. A severe defiance pressed her lips

straight and close. She was still combating someone or something, but she bent her head over the task of dating her missive. Then, with scarcely a pause:

"Dear —," she began, and contemplated the word, a flood of agonizing memory fighting over her face and vision. The next instant she had crushed the paper into a tight ball and flung it into the basket.

She began again, calmly this time, all feeling well in check:

I want to tell you that I am going to marry Christopher Ford tomorrow night. I hope—

A soft, persistent rapping upon the door suspended her hand. She arose straight and stiff, as if called to arraignment. The rapping continued.

She finally managed to speak. "Who is there?" she called in a tense voice.

"It's I—Olive," came the childish response. "I saw the light. May I come in just for a moment?"

It was Christopher's niece, the girl with the odd, shy eyes and thoughtful brow who had won her heart that morning.

Virginia turned the written words face downward and went to unlock the door.

"You don't mind?" The appeal in the girlish voice, in the wistfulness of the girlish face raised to hers, struck through Virginia's psychic armor. A smile illumined her pallor and she drew the girl in.

"Why, of course I don't mind," she said in the voice that Olive had declared would of itself make life a romance for her uncle. She stood a mo-

ment framing the young face in her hands, gazing into the depths of the gray eyes.

"Oh, grandma, what big eyes you have!" she murmured, with a sharp catch in her laugh.

"The better to see you with, my dear," Olive faltered, with a burning blush over her temerity. She was experiencing a severe case of heroine-worship which had overcome her in the first wonder of their meeting that morning, and the intimate nature of this moment sent the blood thrilling through her veins.

"You see," she laughed impulsively as they seated themselves upon the couch, Virginia's arm still about her, "I haven't given my consent yet. But I do now."

She held out both hands and Virginia's closed tight over them.

"I was jealous at first," the girl prattled on, her face alive with excitement; "terribly jealous when the telegram came to me day before yesterday at college. I—I cried. You see, Uncle Kit has been everything to me."

"I know," smiled Virginia, touching the dark hair tenderly.

Olive swallowed her tremulousness before she could continue. "Other girls had their mothers or fathers or sisters—but I had only Uncle Kit always. We always told each other everything—and he hadn't told me a word about you—not a word. So of course I couldn't know."

She seemed to be begging pardon.

"Couldn't know what, child?" asked Virginia in a low voice.

The girl laughed shyly. "That you were fit," she explained, with a sudden proud uplift of the head. "Because, you know, I think my Uncle Kit is the very best man in the world."

"He is the veriest best," acquiesced Virginia quietly.

"I know he's not handsome to some people," Olive challenged.

"Every feature of his face is dear to me," returned his betrothed, suiting her tone to the girl's grave devotion.

"If they were other he wouldn't be he—and I shouldn't love him."

"There isn't an unworthy deed in all his life," burst forth his worshiper. "He is true blue from first to last; and he is giving it all to you—intact. And the wonderful thing is that he is getting full value in return."

"Little Mercenary," said Virginia, with a curious laugh.

"I couldn't know whether you knew about the treasure you were getting, and I wanted to tell you because I was always afraid he wouldn't get 'for value received.'"

Virginia was smiling down into the upturned face. She did not speak.

"And I want to take it back—now that I know you—true blue for true blue."

Virginia laughed again, pressing her lips to the smooth young brow.

"I'm going now, but I had to speak about the miracle, the fairy tale, before I could sleep; that you—just glorious you—should have been kept for him all these years—that no other Prince Charming carried you away before he came—that you, the loveliest lady in all the land, should have been kept safe all these years until the best man in the land came along to claim you!"

"She does not know," thought Virginia, with a wild start of the heart.

"And I cannot tell her now." She laid her cheek upon the dark head.

"What an extravagant little lover you are!" she murmured thickly. "Are you really nineteen or only twelve?"

Olive's arms bent about her. "I love you," she whispered. "I always knew I would die for my Uncle Kit, and I would now for you, too. Please let me make a little prayer: I thank God for making and keeping you—blind—until my Uncle Kit came along." She laughed happily, springing to her feet. "There! Don't laugh at me. I know I'm romantic and emotional and everything. I won't be when I'm older, but please forgive me a little longer. Don't tell Uncle Kit I kept you from your beauty sleep—he'd put

me to bed without any wedding. Good night, best and dearest—after Uncle Kit!"

She had come and gone like a flash of mad, sweet bells.

Virginia stood alone, letting the reverberation of her unmeasured youth die away.

Suddenly she made a stride toward the table, seized the unfinished note, and with averted eyes flung it into the fire. The next instant she was down upon her knees, her face buried in her cushioned chair.

"Oh, you—you who have done so many unworthy deeds—to me," she sobbed, "good-bye, dear—good-bye!"

The decorators had just left. A late afternoon, sabbatic silence brooded over the transfigured house. The room waited in pale misty green splendor for the coming of the bride.

Two girls, coming softly from opposite directions, met with a laughing shock upon the threshold.

"Rubber!" cried Kitty Fullerton, gamin-like, sweeping in.

"The same to you," returned Olive, following in the wake of Virginia's best friend. "Oh, but isn't it lovely! Like a dream of Corot—there, in that corner where the sun shimmers it."

"Tut! tut! It's just hops and things," said Kitty, settling herself in the window-seat, elbow on knee, chin in hand. "She'll be along presently, I suppose, and—"

"Complete the picture of spring."

Kitty put up her lorgnon, examining the girl as she might a curio. "Spring!" she repeated drily, having completed her inspection. "Oh, yes—The triumph of hope over experience, eh?"

"What?" questioned Olive, wide-eyed.

"Nothing—only a nasty cynicism, child. Now you quote!"

"I? What do you mean?"

"Everybody quotes poetry when they meet Virginia for the first time, and you met her only yesterday. So spout all the poems you know; I've

known her all my life and I'm resigned to it."

Olive laughed. "There's only one," she answered, with a shy flush, coming over and throwing herself on the floor at the older girl's feet. "Anyone who knows Shelley must think it when he looks at her. You know the lines:

"And the Naiad-like lily of the vale
Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale.

"Why do you look at me so queerly? I smuggled a bunch of them into her room just now. I was so glad she wasn't there—one hates to explain the best things."

"Smuggled in a bunch of what?" The mockery had vanished from Kitty's face and voice.

"Why, lilies-of-the-valley, of course. Whatever is the matter, Miss Fullerton—Kitty?"

"My dear, go and get them at once—at once, please! Give them to me instead." She smiled persuasively into the surprised face, but pushed her from her peremptorily.

"I don't know what you mean," said Olive stubbornly, her mouth and chin settling into the determined lines which made her Uncle Christopher's face so dominant.

Kitty frowned impatiently. "We never give Virginia lilies-of-the-valley," she said sharply. "The sight of them hurts her. Isn't that enough to make you want to take them away? Or shall I?"

"Wait a minute. Why does the sight of lilies-of-the-valley hurt her?" persisted Olive slowly.

"Because, if you must know," snapped Kitty, "Ralph Winston always gave them to her, and we never needlessly remind her of him, and certainly not today."

"And who is, or was, Ralph Winston?" questioned the girl quietly.

"Why, Olive Ford!" Kitty's eyebrows threatened to recede into her pompadour.

"Yes?"

"Do you—Christopher Ford's niece—the only relative of the man who is

going to marry Virginia Blair tonight—mean to say you have never heard of Ralph Winston?"

"You forget I had never heard of Virginia Blair until two days ago, when my uncle's telegram came to me at Bryn Mawr, asking me to his wedding. I met her only yesterday."

"Olive, didn't you know that Virginia is called *Mrs.* Virginia Blair?"

The prying sun slunk away from the blinds. A graying pallor seemed to touch the erstwhile glory of the room. The girl gazed dumbly at her companion.

"I don't think I understand," she said painfully.

"Didn't you know she was married seven years ago to Lieutenant Ralph Winston and divorced two years later?"

"No," said the girl hoarsely. "Go on."

"That's all. Don't ask to be told any more, dear. It's unspeakable."

"Not to me. I have always understood—things, Kitty Fullerton."

Something compellingly magnetic thrilled from the girl's whole quivering being into Kitty's veins. "What do you want to know?" she asked submissively.

"Everything. No—first: did she—love him?"

Kitty gave a laugh significantly like a sob. "Love him! If you had ever seen him, child, or heard his voice, you would never have asked that question. He was one of those picturesque figures which, on canvas and framed, you might have labeled 'A young girl's dream: a portrait.' And he knew it and lived up to it. His sensationalism she—we—every woman who knew him—called bravery; his egoism, introspection; his libertinism, bohemianism. His gallant bearing, his dash, his glance, his voice, cut a swath of triumph for him wherever he chose to win.

"And one night, at a military hop, Virginia Blair, the only child of the wealthy, widowed Judge Blair, came his way. You know how beautiful she is today—you say she reminds you

of spring; so he said seven years ago when she was twenty—and the comparison was singularly apt. You quoted Shelley's 'Sensitive Plant'—so did he when first he saw her. He had all the gifts and graces of the profligate. Sometimes I wonder if it isn't just those irresistible gifts and graces that spoil them for any real worth. But perhaps it compensates—heaven knows! I'm sure I don't in these high carnival days. Well, there they were. He looked down and she looked up; and there was no more question, no more father, no more authority for Virginia Blair. For, from the first, Judge Blair distrusted him—all genuine men did, partly from instinct, partly from rumor, partly, I suppose, from jealousy. Finally he forbade her receiving attentions from him. Virginia answered that some day she hoped to be his wife. Her father said never with his consent. And so one evening in September—just such an evening as this—just as the sun was setting, she stole quietly out of the house with a handbag, met him by appointment under a sycamore tree in the park, and a half-hour later was his lawfully wedded wife. She had left a letter for her father, and—you know how those things always end—he adores her, and two weeks later he had forgiven her and received her with open arms.

"Exactly six months later Lieutenant Winston's brother officer, Captain Stewart Rolfe, sued his wife for divorce, naming Lieutenant Ralph Winston as co-respondent. He was court-martialed and dismissed from the Army. In the course of the proceedings Lieutenant Ralph Winston's gambling debts and other pleasant obligations took a hand in painting him in his true colors. But Virginia Winston laughed proudly at it all, and went away with her disgraced husband head up, yielding no quarter. They went to Shanghai, where he ostensibly had some business interests. Virginia wrote charming letters home to her father, to me, to all her friends. Yet a year after her

departure, for no apparent reason. Judge Blair suddenly packed his trunk and disappeared. Two months later he returned with his daughter. God knows what terrible scenes they had gone through before he induced her to come with him, but when we saw her none of us could speak. She was the ghost of lovely Virginia Blair, but a ghost that smiled upon us as if she said: 'I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul.' He—her father—had found her alone; five months before he—that scoundrel—had run off with the wife of his best friend. Well, the divorce was easily granted. And—that's all."

Absolute silence followed her words.

Finally, "Where is he?" asked Olive Ford in a cold little voice.

"Who?" questioned Kitty, busily mopping her eyes.

"Ralph Winston—her husband."

"Somewhere in the Orient. I've heard. But he's not her husband, child."

"Oh, yes, he is."

"Why, Olive, I told you they were divorced."

"That's nothing. She loved him."

"But he had outraged her love—killed it by downright crime and cruelty."

"Love is love forevermore."

"Little girl, you go to kindergarten; that's one of the games you play."

"Yes. You wise ones call it idealization. But let me tell you, in the long run science and the ideals you laugh at will be found to be one. Only, science is taking the long way round. And tonight Virginia Blair is—" The words came heavily, slowly. She stopped, her young face bitterly aquiver.

"What?" urged Kitty, curiously unstrung by the girl's fierce contention.

Olive's face hardened, burning dark. "There is no marriage but the love marriage," she pronounced deliberately. "After that—or before—all is commerce—or prostitution."

The ugly word left her innocent lips with the finality of a verdict.

"Good heavens, Olive Ford, you don't know what you are saying!"

"A woman like Virginia Blair," proceeded the girl monotonously, as if possessed, "is a soul as well as a body. You can never divorce a soul from its mate because the memory of the soul is eternal; that's what we mean by immortality. Some women have no souls. They can go through the marriage ceremony as often as they like; they are joined, never married. But Virginia Blair is not that low kind. And, Kitty Fullerton, she, Virginia Blair, is cheating my Uncle Kit!" She pounded the other's knee frantically.

"Stop that," cried Kitty, seizing her wrist. "Remember of whom you are speaking—the most exquisite woman I have ever known. She loves your Uncle Kit. The other is dead to her; she has buried him deep. Her whole life shows it—has shown it for the past three years. I don't know where you got that astounding puritanic idea, but you're wrong. Life isn't so stern, so hopeless. Look at me, Olive; you are quite, quite wrong."

"No, no, no!" exclaimed the girl passionately, springing to her feet. "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy." I may be young, inexperienced, romantic; but I'm right. I know I am right."

"Of course you are right," echoed a charming voice from the hall. "Right as a trivet. Kitty Fullerton, I'll lay you ten to one Olive is right."

Virginia stood in the doorway, parting the heavy curtains.

As she stepped into the room all Olive's wild theories rose up in a body to confound her. Virginia stood there in her fair purity, giving the lie to every unbeautiful doubt. In the radiance of the soft brown eyes below the low brooding white brow, in the gentle dignity of the slender shoulders, in the quiet poise of the whole graceful figure lay a world of potent refutation and appeal.

"How lovely the room looks, doesn't it?" she said, her eyes lingering in their

gaze. "But what were you two quarreling about as I came along? Explain; I'll be umpire." She smiled questioningly upon their dumbness.

Suddenly, moved by one of those swift impulses for which she never could account, Olive stood by her side.

"'Lady Fair,'" she began dramatically, drawing up her lanky figure as to a great height, making as if to draw off a plumed hat, and then bending low, "'there can be no quarrel in your lovely presence. Far have I traveled and many fair faces seen since last we met, but yours shines effulgent, dimming all the rest. I stand suspended, awaiting your reply. By my sword I were a happy man to call you mine. Proud indeed were I could I this day call you openly—sweetheart and wife!'" Still bending low, she raised the slender hand to her lips and pressed upon it a lingering kiss.

Surprised at the trembling of the hand, she straightened and looked up. The lovely face smiled upon her through a strange pallor.

"You silly girl," laughed Virginia unsteadily. "And now I—I'm on my way to my room to lie down till Anna calls me to dress. I've had all the dinner I want, so *au revoir*. Make yourselves pretty tonight." She waved to them and was gone.

Olive stood staring after her. Presently she wheeled around upon the silent witness and strode over to her.

"What happened?" she demanded in a rough but frightened whisper.

"Where," drawled Kitty in a low voice, "did you ever hear that speech?"

"I never heard it; I said it. It comes from 'Osmond and his Philomena,' a skit on the eighteenth-century novel. I played Osmond to Bess Alvord's Philomena at college on class day. Why did she go off like that?"

"Lieutenant Ralph Winston," explained Kitty in slow irony, "played Osmond to Virginia Blair's Philomena at an entertainment long ago. Ever after his sweetest endearment for her was 'sweetheart and wife.' She told me so before the court-martial. I

verily believe, my dear, that the devil is using you as his jester-in-chief."

"It looks like it," declared the bewildered girl helplessly. "Oh, let me get out of this! I'm off for a run in the open to get these ghosts and goblins out of my brain." She turned and fled.

Five minutes later Kitty arose dreamily from her seat and presently only shadows and silence filled the waiting greenroom.

Virginia entered her room and dazedly locked the door. For several seconds she leaned against it, a din of confused voices in her ears, a maze of confused visions in her eyes. These presently cleared and, distinct above all, came low, sonorous, caressing words, "Sweetheart and wife—sweetheart and wife," repeating themselves interminably, claiming her completely.

As one who sleeps while she walks, she approached a chair before her dressing-table and sank blindly into it. Her arms fell listlessly at her sides, her eyes gazed into the distance, a piteous sadness slowly enveloped all her relaxed loveliness.

"Sweetheart and wife," the reverberating words beat themselves like a muffled blow upon her brain, dulling consciousness. A faint, delicate fragrance stole to her from the lilies-of-the-valley on the table and her nostrils dilated greedily. Her eyes widened. A vague, tremulous smile parted her lips. Mechanically, as if through force of habit, she leaned forward, drew a spray from the vase, and lingeringly fastened it in her bosom.

Her head remained drooped, her eyes upon the lily bells. The faint, delicate fragrance wrapped her close.

"Between dusk and dark."

Her glance wandered to the window. Not yet, dear love. A little while and the glow over the hills will fade to pink. Then—

"The bench under the sycamore tree."

She knew it well; a quiet spot in the wide hollow.

"You will not fail me, sweet?"

What need to ask while his thrilling eyes held hers?

And some day father would forgive—some day when, having lost his bitterness over the thought of parting with her, his reason must acknowledge Ralph's true worth in the light of her great happiness. Dear old dad! How he had always loved her. It seemed so mean to steal away from him in this way; but then, there was no other way—

"Tonight, then, love, forever."

"See, the glow is fading!"

As one who sleeps while she walks, the vague smile still slightly parting her lips, with unseeing eyes, she softly arose, approached the closet, took out coat and hat, slipped them on without a falter, pinned her veil securely, picked up her gloves from the dresser, drew them on, picked up the new, carefully packed suit-case from the corner, and, noiselessly as a wraith, passed out of the room, through the empty corridors, and so out of the house. The great front door swung gently to behind her.

Evening was abroad. The slender figure flitted down the familiar streets, her lambent brown eyes gazing straight ahead from the strange, fixed pallor of her face.

She was, perhaps, a little early, and Ralph was always a little late, but it was better than waiting at home, like a thief in the night; and she would not mind waiting in the open, now that the step was taken. All her friends would be dining at this hour; there would be no passer-by to recognize her. And the bench under the sycamore tree was secluded.

She entered the park, turning unerring footsteps toward the appointed spot.

Quiet—quiet—quiet everywhere. She seated herself upon the bench, put down the suit-case and sat gazing ahead with the fixity of a statue's gaze. A flitting bird rustled the leaves overhead, and again the tender evening quiet fell about the motionless figure upon the bench. The moments sped.

Over the brow of the hill the form of a young girl was sharply etched

against the pale saffron sky. She stood a moment as if hesitating between two pathways—the well-worn winding road at her right, and the wild, picturesque incline at her left. With smiling expectancy she decided and swung down the steep.

Halfway her foot slackened, her breath came pantingly; she had espied the still figure on the bench under the sycamore. With dilated eyes she came to a halt a few feet away in the dim shadow of a fir.

And then, as in a flood of light, knowledge tumbled tumultuously into Olive Ford's quick brain, blinding her for a moment; but only for a moment. She knew.

A painful triumph lifted the girl's head high; but her eyes were dim with pitying tears. "Thank God, it is I," she thought simply.

The great proof of her love was at hand—not to let her know; *never* to let her or Uncle Kit know.

Cannily, like one to whom the dark things of life had once been the way of light, she noiselessly approached the waiting figure.

She did not touch her, no sound escaped her lips; but, as if in response to a call, without a sign of wavering, the still figure arose, picked up the suit-case, and, with eyes gazing ahead, followed the figure of the young girl, who gave no backward look.

Down the winding, graveled path, into the dim streets they passed, the inspired maiden and her unconscious charge, one tense, fixed idea—thought, prayer, command, what you will—filling the mystic-bound leader:

"Follow—follow me."

And the woman with the wide, unseeing eyes followed, unknowing.

Whether they touched ground, rounded corners, passed people, heard or saw sound or motion Olive never knew. Sensation was at such pitch it seemed at standstill.

That later on they must stop, that there was a house to be reached, steps to be mounted, a door to be opened, a room to be gained, held no place or part in her brain. Only that this dark

figure, dead to the world about, moving blindly close behind her, should continue moving close behind her, that was the herculean task assigned her.

And presently the strain loosening, she found that she had achieved—that they two were standing alone in the darkened room with the door closed between them and the gross, cynic world.

Still enacting her strange, protective role she fastened her eye upon the slender silhouette beside her, the while she mechanically touched the electric button.

The light revealed the form of Virginia Blair in hat and coat, suit-case in hand, motionless under the chandelier. By the vacant expression in the beautiful, far-gazing eyes, Olive knew she was still absent upon her soul's adventure, and by the same sign she knew that this semblance of a woman was hers to command—her slave, her creature.

And she commanded.

There was no audible word, but instantly the suit-case was placed upon the floor, the hat and coat removed and hung in the closet, the gloves laid by upon the dresser, and Virginia Blair was seated in the chair before the dressing-table. At the same moment Olive, with quickened vision, seized both the lilies on the table and the spray in her bosom and flung the mischievous messengers out of the open window. Her task was completed. She leaned breathless upon the table for support.

A troubled look passed over the calm face of the waiting woman. With a swift step in her direction Olive flung her arms about her and drew the lovely head to her shoulder.

"Virginia," she whispered, her cheek close to hers, "Virginia dear, wake up!"

A suffocated scream answered her, and Olive felt herself flung as with superhuman strength against the opposite wall.

Virginia, breathing heavily, sobbing tearlessly, was staring wildly at her.

"You were asleep," cried the girl with eager, trembling lips, a mad pity wiping out every other thought. "You were asleep, and I waked you."

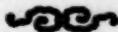
Virginia frowned angrily upon her.

"You were dreaming," Olive continued, still in frantic explanation, "and I waked you."

A shudder crept slowly over the slender figure. "Dreaming," she murmured, "such a dream—such a strange, realistic dream, Olive, child! Are you sure—are you quite sure—I was—dreaming?" She gazed appealingly at her.

"Why, Virginia," laughed Olive brokenly; "what else could you have been doing sitting there?"

"Why, of course, what else?" Virginia repeated blankly, the customary bright tone catching up the pretty cadence of her voice. She glanced about her and smiled upon the girl, holding out both hands to her. "Dear, I am forgetting," she laughed. "How absurd! This is my wedding night."



YESTERDAY AND TOMORROW

THY tears, yea, all thy weeping,
Will it awake dead yesterday?
No day is sounder sleeping,
A thousand, thousand years away.

'Tis but a name, the sorrow
Of other than the present morn.
Yesterday's dead; the morrow,
Perchance it never will be born.

JOHN VANCE CHENEY.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING SOMEBODY

By Edgar Saltus

TO know yourself is all very well; not to know your neighbor is better; but to be known is celebrity. People who cannot be celebrities occasionally attempt to be somebodies, and, failing in that, try to look as though they had succeeded. The effort is commendable; it is also easy, in addition to being important.

Yes, indeed. Hereabouts, if you are nobody you are nothing, and abroad you are nowhere. Either condition has its inconveniences. In Paris they are particularly depressing. In Paris, French is a dead language. Germany, you know, conquered there twice: first with her bayonets, latterly with her beer, the result being that in the best hotels only the impurest Berlinese is spoken. French, when not on the bill of fare, is regarded as an extra and charged as such. This item only dukes and ambassadors dispute.

Dukes and ambassadors are somebodies. If you are thinking of going abroad a good plan will be to model your deportment after theirs. In so doing, when anyone presumes to address you, you will find it distinctly impressive, if you cannot answer rudely, not to answer at all.

But rudeness is to be preferred. An ounce of insolence is worth a pound of Ollendorf. It is worth more. It will take you further than any acquaintance, however superficial, with French and even with Berlinese. It will cause you to be mistaken, at least temporarily, for somebody, and, even temporarily, it is always advantageous to be mistaken for that.

An outward and visible sign of this sort of thing is what foreigners call decorations. Here they are infre-

quent. Abroad they abound. In France they are omnipresent. But there their tenure is threatened. A bill providing for their abolition has been recently proposed.

What the grounds are for this measure we are uninformed. But we hope that it will not pass. Our reasons are purely personal. The last time we went to a theatre in Paris we lost the check for our coat. On inquiring at the cloak-room the woman in charge asked what kind of a coat it was. We told her that there was no decoration in the buttonhole. She produced it instantaneously. It was the only one of the kind in the place. Had this measure been operative, we might be inquiring still. Decorations are therefore highly serviceable to those that have none. If only on that account it may be hoped that this measure will not pass.

There are graver reasons. In this country, where every other man you meet has something colorful in his coat, we, as a people, do not believe in decorations. We believe in badges. The wearing of these little things is a custom, of course, and, to the wearers, a custom that must be agreeable. But it is one that has been imported. Obviously, therefore, were this measure to pass and were it then adopted by other nations, we Americans would be the only decorated people. Whereupon, being a civilized race, and, as such, accustomed to follow the fashions, we would have to relinquish our badges, and with them the satisfaction which they presumably induce. That, we cannot help feeling, would be regrettable.

Decorations have, therefore, their

uses. They are serviceable if you have not got any, and if you have they make you feel as if you were somebody. So important is that feeling that men of determination who have been unable to acquire it officially have provoked it surreptitiously. The statement may seem fantastic. Here is an agreeable instance.

Recently, at the Paris Élysée—the White House of France—a gentleman was observed wearing a decoration which struck an amateur as being so beautiful that he ventured to ask whether, without indiscretion, he might be permitted to inquire what it was. "Oh," said the gentleman, with a little diffident laugh, "it is my own invention."

After all, why not? Besides, did it not show enterprise? No one else having recognized his claims to be somebody, he had done it himself. There is the right spirit.

There is, though, a method that is perhaps superior. At Versailles, on the occasion of the refounding of the German Empire, there appeared the late Mr. Washburne, who, at the time, was the American representative. There also appeared a mob of sovereigns and, with them, a swarm of envoys, legates, aides, equerries, generalissimi. The assembly was gorgeous. There were uniforms radiant as rainbows, and on these uniforms crosses without number, a constellation of stars, every decoration under the sun. There was not a man there not tricked out in a fashion absolutely stunning. No, not one, except Mr. Washburne, who stood about, quite unadorned, in democratic black. Said Bismarck: "He is the most distinguished-looking person present."

Which rather goes to show, don't you think, that a good way to attract attention is to differ a bit from your neighbor? In that difference and its maintenance is the whole art of being somebody. The secret of it is simple. You have but to intensify your individuality. If you have no individuality, cultivate one.

There are people who will tell you

that it is better to have a regular income. That is a very middle-class view. Investments in the prose of life yield only dulness. You talk shop instead of subtleties, and degenerate into a mere man of means. But, given individuality, and though you have nothing you may have everything. At a bound you leap to the lips of men. Youths there are, full of promise, naturally fitted for that leap. Before the opportunity occurs they are deformed into conformity. They get what is called a thorough education. How delectably false that description is! The only things worth knowing are the things that cannot be taught. In spite of which, or perhaps precisely on that account, they are shown the highroads and told to follow them. The highroads are sterile. Yet on them they proceed, hoisting their neighbors' standards, expressing other people's opinions, or rather their absence of ideas, developing low passions for respectability, exhibiting generally the conventional in all its horrors, and, with it, the humdrum unredeemed by a single revolt, the spectacle of human sheep. In later life you find them interesting themselves in matters in which they have no concern, and discussing people who never heard of them. The wages of similitude is non-entity. The bulk of the census has that for reward.

To acquire something more ponderable, be different. Be different, and evermore be different. But be condescending. Nothing, except genius, can make you so well hated as a properly distributed potpourri of condescending airs. You may object that you do not want to be hated. That is because you do not know what is good for you. Animosity is the tribute that failure pays to success. Until you trail rancors as a torch trails smoke, you cannot claim to be anybody. Yet the moment you have induced a more or less general feeling of exasperation, such is the inane love of fair play that your best detractors will turn about and declare that there must be a good deal in you. They are certainly in error. But

no matter about that. You are somebody.

To be somebody is not, therefore, very difficult. In any event, you will find it more satisfactory than not being anybody. In a city, for instance, like New York, where everybody scoots about in a motor, a man who drove behind postilions might readily be mistaken for the real thing. The impression created could be heightened by giving theatre-parties to big rag dolls, with which, during *entr'actes* and interludes, the host did not omit to affect to converse. Supper, naturally, would follow, not for the dolls or necessarily for the host, but for his friends—better yet, for his enemies—a supper variegated with grains of nenuphar, eyes of angel-fish, salmis of quetzals, orchid wine, rose liqueur, the maxims of Confucius and chrysanthemum soup. The exoticism of these proceedings would be promptly written up and the originator become a subject of editorial discussion. He would be somebody, if but for a day.

In lieu of which aspirants take to making money instead of spending it, or, what is quite as futile, to writing. That is all so stupid and amateurish. In these latitudes, where everyone you know is beastly rich, it is a real distinction to be poor. As for writing, dear us! In these days, when you find the relaxations of cooks and crooks on every stall, it is more original to commemorate Epicurus, who was original, and who never wrote anything.

Besides, mere money and even a real masterpiece will not make people turn around and look at you. There is too much of the one and too few of those that care a rap about the other for either to differentiate you from your neighbor by a straw. To stand out you must omit to fall in. You must rigorously avoid any resemblance to tedious persons. When they talk platitude to you hand them paradox back. If you cannot do better, bark. Tell them that cannibalism is society in its ideal state, that Homer was born in Harlem, that Shakespeare was a woman who practiced dentistry, and that you are medi-

tating a comic history of the moon. Announce whatever they can least digest. The shock of it will alarm what little imagination they possess. They will complain of your eccentricities. And so much the better. In the complaint of your fellow-beings are the beginnings of fame.

Indeed they are. Originality is first abused and then annexed. Besides, the reproach of eccentricity is one that you may covert. Eccentricity is but an avoidance of the everyday. It means out of the common. The man who first wore a high hat was regarded as eccentric. The man who first carried an umbrella was regarded as worse. It was thought crazy of Swift to write about a broomstick. Yet today, do not the most respectable among us wear high hats, carry umbrellas—what is more typical, borrow them—and write about nothing whatever?

The primal charm of these novelties acceptance has vulgarized. To stand out you must find something new. But in a land where all men dress alike and all dress like undertakers, that is disgracefully easy. Promenade in winter in white broadcloth and in summer in raspberry serge and you will not merely stand out, you will be held up. Editors will despatch their young gentlemen to obtain your views on fashion, to snapshot you while they are at it, and your face, your form, too, multiplied indefinitely, may cause a little talk.

May, we say, for the result will be surer if instead of a new caprice you invent a new delight. A satrap once offered his satrapy for one. He failed to get it, of course, but the offer made him talked about, which perhaps was just what he was after. Satraps are frightfully insincere.

But then society was created by simpletons that satraps might live in it; and to live, to really live, although at first blush it may seem a very general occupation, is, on the contrary, curiously rare. Few there are that live. The existence of the bulk of humanity is comparable to that of ants. It is just as anonymous, quite as obscure.

To escape from the horrors of that obscurity, to climb, however transiently, into view, to be obvious, to have a name, though it be a bad one, men have gone to the scaffold, occasionally to the altar and thence back again to the obscurity from which they came. Yet that, perhaps, is better than nothing. It may be dreadful to have your name in the papers; it is still more dreadful not to. To see it there is really something; but to see yourself caricatured is success. Only celebrities are lampooned.

To achieve that is the crowning grace. How to do it, though, is rather complex. Success is quite like etiquette. Both have their mysteries. A man wrote a book on "How to Behave." No sooner had it appeared than the wife of his bosom sued him for divorce. Another man wrote a book on "How to Succeed." His father-at-law had him jailed for embezzlement. Are not these delightful instances? Do they not show the intricacies of Satan and his pomps? Besides, a book on behavior must be hard labor, particularly when you come to consider that foreigners have no manners and Americans a great many, and all of them bad. Parallely, a book on success is bound to be the work of failures. The conditions of success are such that those who achieve it always have to get others to tell how it was done.

Success, as you may see, is therefore not merely complex but debilitating. Originality is just the reverse. Originality is an exhilarant. Its basic factor is an ability to do and say things which your neighbor cannot. That ability was Disraeli's. It was also Brummel's. These men emerged from nowhere into lampooning and renown. Individually their fates were

various. But that is a detail. They were somebodies in their day and are somebodies still.

In an effort to resemble them, however microscopically, avoid, as you would a cobra, new ways of being dull. These ways it is a mistake to regard as evidences of original thought. It is true that for them society has always an innocent love. Any fresh incentive to yawning strikes it as so nice. Efforts of this order may therefore gain you the passing attention of tea-cards. But they will not conduct you to fame. Only brag and bounce can do it. Only that, determination and conceit.

Conceit is not appreciated at its true value, except by the French, who have such a pretty name for it. They call it *amour propre*, which, to them, is one of the cardinal virtues, and should be to you. For it admonishes you to think well of yourself. If you omit to, who in the world will do it for you? If you do not look as though you owned the earth who can do it in your stead? Assert yourself. That is the way to get on. If one plan fail, try another—try a dozen others. Through them all assume a superiority, though you have it not. Insist on being somebody.

Otherwise your name will appear in the papers but once—but once!—and the world will learn of your existence only through hearing that you are dead. What is worse, it will not care, even then. Think of the martyr who discovered that modesty is its own reward. His name is lost, his identity forgotten. He was too retiring by half, in addition to being nobody. Of all obituaries that is the limit.

Insist, then, on being somebody. It is not only important, it is easy. You can fool everybody but yourself.

SHE—Mother heard you propose to me the other night.

HE—Heavens, what did she say about it?

"She said how many modern improvements there were since she was young."

THE RETURN TO THE SPA

By John O'Keefe

THE place has changed but little in the years
Since I the hourly glassful swallowed duly,
But, oh! there is a change, and it appears
Within yours truly.

I lift my glass of water with a frown,
(Six in the day I'm told to take, at present!)
And as my shrinking throat it courses down
It's demned unpleasant!

Yet one fair morning, many years ago,
I stood with Kittie, Eve's divinest daughter,
At this same counter, eager for the flow
Of sulphur water.

"How bitter!" Kittie said. I seized the chance—
No whit abashed, though all the guzzling crowd hear—
And I replied, with deep significance,
"It isn't *now*, dear."

I saw her blushing face's image fall
Upon the water; though the Spa director
Had said the stuff was strongly mineral,
He lied—'twas nectar!

But that was years ago—ah! how they've flown!—
And I and Kittie parted, minus kisses.
Today, I'm lifting glasses with my own
True, lawful missus!

She does not peep at me across the rim;
Her heavy lids are sorrowfully blinking;
She's gouty in her dexter lower limb—
That's why she's drinking.

And I'm no better off. Dyspepsia gnaws
My vitals in a way beyond describing.
Not love, but my physician, is the cause
Of my imbibing.

Ah, Kittie, but the cup has altered quite!
With you I drink to quench my burnings inner;
Now, I would stir a vanished appetite
In time for dinner.

THE INDIFFERENT

NAY, since he does not love me, let him go
 His own blithe way, while my withhelden gift
 Lies all unused. Let me be wise to lift
 My eyes to his with steady gaze and slow,
 That he in his indifference may not know.
 Let me deny my heart the sweet unthrift
 That fain would spend its treasure, lest I sift
 Dream-dust upon the ground, and waste it so!

Nay, since he does not love me, let him speed
 Upon his quest. Let there be no surprise,
 No pity starting sudden from his eyes
 To pierce my wound till it must break and bleed;
 Now while my heart is strong to stanch its need
 And tranquil still to utter its good-byes.

ETHEL M. KELLEY.



TOTALLY UNKNOWN TO HIM

PARKE—Did you meet many strangers on your vacation?
 LANE—Why, yes. I saw quite a little of my family.



JOHN—Nothing sets a man up more quickly than the admiration of a lot of women.

JAMES—And nothing lets him down more completely than his wife's explanation of why they admire him.



WHEN you play at love the score is likely to be a tie.

"MY KIND OF MAN"

By Eleanor H. Abbott

IF there is one quality in the world which I adore, that quality is eagerness.

I like a dog that jumps at you. I like a woman who runs upstairs. I like a man who won't take "no" for an answer. But best of any eager thing in the world I like an invitation that has the compliment of precocity. I like to hold an unripe pleasure in my hand and watch it mellow into realization. I would go anywhere with anyone who actually knew six months ahead what he wanted me to do on a given date.

I was engaged once to a man who never knew until Thursday night just what it was that he had intended doing on Wednesday morning. I *hate* the type! But I liked the man. I liked the man very much indeed. His nature was deep and calm and serene, like a Morris chair. But I wanted to rock. Oh, my heavens, how I wanted to rock!

When the crash came the man and I were standing on a Persian rug in front of my grandmother's fireplace. I smashed my engagement just as hard as I could over his calm, yellow head, and I supposed of course that he would turn and run. Someone had to run, but he didn't seem to think of it, so I literally "up and bolted" out of the room—and out of his life.

For two years I kept on bolting. And so far as I knew he was still standing on the rug in front of the fire. I did not go home again to find out.

Grandmother said harsh things to me about my impetuosity—things so harsh that I promised never to forgive her. So I stayed away and traveled

for my health—or, rather, for my grandmother's health. It didn't make much difference to me. I have money and freedom and good looks enough to choose my own gait, and I certainly thrived on the excitement of travel and visiting.

Next to being engaged I would rather be unengaged than anything else in the world. There is an ingratiating slimness about the life that keeps you—figuratively, at least—stroking your sleek sides. There is no venture so high that you are not light enough to leap it. There is no difficulty so narrow that you cannot squeeze through it—alone. No one to consult, no one to cater to, no one to worry about—I love it!

Yet I am no fool. I never for a second bragged that there was no possible mate for me on all the earth. I simply had reached that stage of the game where, if I saw my mate coming, I should certainly dodge him, though if he took me unawares, and knocked me down and dragged me home by my pompadour, I should probably straighten my hat and go with him.

I was in just this identical mood when Edna Blunt's invitation came. What I am really going to tell about is Edna Blunt's house-party. Edna is a girl whom I used to know pretty well before she married and went away to Connecticut, and so when she wrote me in January to engage me for a house-party 'way off in June, you can well believe that I was delighted enough to accept at once, though it meant the canceling of a rather unique Southern trip that I had planned for myself.

Edna's whole letter of invitation was

interesting. But the part that interested me most was this:

I hope you won't look on the date in question as though it were a suspended jail sentence hanging over you. It seems absurd to engage and bind you fast so far ahead, but the truth of the matter is there's a man here—a friend of my husband's—who is extremely infatuated with your photograph, and will give me no peace until I have not only arranged a date and place of meeting but have engaged you absolutely for that occasion; though, of course, dear Gladys, I solemnly promised not to breathe a word of it all to you, for, of course, you couldn't come if you knew of his scheming—that is, if he knew that you knew.

He's off tomorrow for Mexico on some kind of an exploring jig. He's quite an adventurer, and he won't come back to this country at all this summer unless he can meet you. How's that for eagerness?

P. S.—His name is Fayall Pritchard, and he's big and dark and ugly, and he adores pink, and I'm sure you'll like him, for he's *your kind of man*.

Now, I surely could resist a man's being infatuated with my picture, or liking my favorite color, or even being a big, ugly explorer with the fascinating name of Fayall Pritchard; but I never, never, never could resist a man who knew positively in January that he'd rather meet me in June—rather bind himself to meet me in June than do any other glorious, unknown thing that might arise in the interim. Moreover, the phrase, "your kind of man" filled me with a curiously delicious thrill of foreboding. For up to this time I certainly never had met anyone who could answer the description of "my kind of man."

Paul certainly was no explorer. Indeed, he seemed to cherish a perfect horror of doing anything the first time, and as you can almost never skip and begin with the second time, we were thereby naturally debarred from a great many pleasures—that is, I was, but he didn't seem to care. And as to being "big and dark and ugly," goodness knows Paul was big enough, but he was astonishingly blond and handsome, and my own private theory is that handsome men, particularly blond handsome men, haven't any temperament. And as to eagerness, well, I've surely more than hinted that

Paul never got round to proposing to me until after I had accepted him.

So, taken all in all, you can well understand how excited I was over Edna Blunt's invitation. At last I was to meet "my kind of man"—a man who might very possibly force me to dodge. My pulse quickened at the very thought, and I then and there decided to dodge in nothing less alluring than patent-leathers with perfectly huge silver buckles. I have that phase of practical mind which makes me save my silk stockings for canoeing rather than church. Grandmother saves hers for church. But I have the nature that caters to emergencies. And my purse, most fortunately, is not as slim as my ankles.

The very second I had written my letter of acceptance to Edna I rummaged about for a duplicate of the picture which had pleased Fayall Pritchard. Frankly speaking, the picture pleased me also—that is, I am glad I look like that! I like the black, loose wave of my hair, the low brow, the gray, gray eyes, and the impetuous, short-lipped mouth. Best of all, I like the concentrated something in my eyes. Grandmother says I look hungry. But grandmother would never acknowledge that there were any stronger forces than dinner-hunger in the women of her family. When I looked at that picture in the light of Fayall Pritchard's interest, I said: "Gladys Gaylord, you are a wild, wild, wild thing. But some day, just as sure as you're born, you're going to get caught and tamed and put in a cage. But even so, the wild bird in the cage has probably more to think about and remember than the hen that cackles freely round the whole front yard."

So I deliberately went to work in six months and dreamed my dreams and saw my visions, and got together a picturesque outfit of clothes that promised to addle even a Mexican explorer, and when June came I packed up the said dreams, visions and clothes, and went down to Connecticut to catch a glimpse of this wonderful

man who would possibly make me dodge.

It's quite a long journey down from Bangor to Connecticut, and I have usually found all train travel irksome and tedious; but this particular journey went like mad, and I found myself fairly hurled through the air and into Edna's arms before I had half decided as to my method of greeting—Mr. Pritchard.

He was standing on the piazza talking with three other men as I stumbled out of the carriage. I should have recognized him in a crowd of fifty, and though he barely lifted his eyes as I hurried by with Edna, there was something so startlingly keen in his glance that I felt as though I had suddenly been shoved to the edge of the world and was tottering there on one foot. I did not altogether like the sensation.

But by the time I was upstairs, and had unpacked my trunk, and had a bath, and donned my best pink muslin gown, I was quite ready to compete with any geographical hero on the globe, to say nothing of one from a mere suburban place like Mexico.

Mr. Pritchard was introduced to me just before we went in to dinner. I like to shake hands with new people. It's a good test. Most handshakes express one of two things, either "I'd like to know you better," or "I don't give a darn." But Fayall Pritchard's lingering clasp signaled so distinctly, "We've met before," that I blurted right out, "No, we haven't!" And then, of course, I had to laugh, but he just squared his shoulders a trifle, and stood back and grinned the very faintest perceptible grin, and when I looked up at him he half closed his eyes at me. Now, when some people half close their eyes at you like that they shut you *out*, but when Fayall Pritchard shut his eyes he shut you *in*—shut you in so close that he might just as well have put his arms around you. It was fearfully disconcerting. And yet—I liked his courage.

But when he immediately offered me his arm I knew perfectly well that

my hand trembled on his sleeve, and I went out to dinner *frightened*—for the first time in my life frightened of a man!

I love the first meal at a house-party. It's the finest guessing-game that I know. Whom will you like? Whom will you hate? Who's the hero? Who's the villain? It was perfectly evident to me that Fayall Pritchard was the hero, but the villain honors seemed equally divided between Edna Blunt's husband, who's an awful tease, and an excessively officious Washington girl who seemed to know all Congress assembled by its first name. But villains don't count much at house-parties.

The conversation that night was witty and brilliant, not to say vivid. There were twelve of us, and everyone was married except the Washington girl, a young New York architect, Mr. Pritchard and myself. Having been rather heavily chaperoned through all the earlier and least dangerous years of my life, it seems to me extraordinarily droll, now, at twenty-five, when sentiments have grown to emotions and riddles to the very edge of their answers—it seems droll, I say, *now* to be running full tilt and stark free through the riotous jollity and unhampered clock-schedule of my young married friends. Nothing is duller to me in these days than a complete party of unmarried youngsters, with a professional chaperon who sits and wrings her hands and watches the clock.

I think there are no clocks in Edna's house. No one ever speaks of time, except as "good time." There certainly was no ticking hint in the dining-room, and we must have lingered for hours over that first dinner. The room was full of witchery, with its dark-paneled walls, its gleaming silver, the tremulous flicker of breeze-blown candles, the fragrant fog of cigarette smoke, the tinkle of wineglasses, and through it all the single disquietude of moonlight, white, reeking moonlight, calling, calling through the latticed windows. Women's laughter, men's persuasions, wit, knowledge,

brain and beauty, all were there. And I loved it!

I do not think that Edna's table was crowded more than usual, but it seemed to me I had never before sat so close to people. I know I scarcely spoke to Fayall Pritchard, yet the side of my face next to his burned as though his own was pressed against it. Is it any wonder I was benumbed and foolish, like a gawky schoolgirl? Once when I turned in sudden curiosity for a glimpse of his face, he smiled at me again, that strange subtle little grin, and answered startlingly: "Yes, my hair is just like yours, only blacker, and my eyes are just like yours, only——"

"How did you know what I was thinking?" I stammered, and then he began to close his eyes.

"Don't you close your eyes at me like that!" I gasped, and something in my voice must have smitten him, for he straightened up suddenly and began to talk quite loud and distinctly about his Mexican adventures. His voice was wonderfully compelling, and in a minute the whole table was listening to him. His power of tone and expression thrilled me with satisfaction. He told of his journey to Mexico, his ventures by land and sea, his eager, risky, stubborn search for a paltry Spanish manuscript that some New York bibliomaniac coveted for his own. His narrative was full of palaces and plazas, of faded tapestries, of dusk and dreams and daring, but Edna interrupted it with a strident little, "But did you find the manuscript?"

"Why, of course," said Fayall Pritchard; and that "of course" had the most terrible, blood-curdling finality to it that I have ever heard in my life. My blood ran cold.

Then the Washington girl began to look sentimental. "What a romantic life, Mr. Pritchard!" she exclaimed, with clasped hands. "Are you always exploring? What do you expect to find in stupid old Connecticut?"

"A wife," said Fayall Pritchard quite calmly, and as the room went

round in a whirl of glass and silver, and voices rang like smashed china in my ears, I caught above all other voices the wild "Ha! ha!" of Harold Blunt's laughter, and saw Edna signal him frantically to keep quiet. Then everybody adjourned in more or less confusion to the piazza, and I fled away unnoticed to my room, and cried as though my heart would break. Wouldn't you have cried to be so frightened?

Edna came up a few minutes later—it was eleven o'clock, and tried to comfort me.

"You silly girl," she said; "I thought you liked eager men."

"I do, I do," I sobbed; "I love them, but you told Harold, you went and told Harold, and he *laughed!*"

Edna considered her excuse carefully before she gave it. Finally she acknowledged: "Yes, I—I had to tell Harold. You see, you have to tell your husband things, for if you don't tell when you're awake, and get him seriously interested, you'll very likely mumble it when you're asleep, and then he'll make light of it, and perhaps tell it as a joke at a dinner-party."

The excuse did not seem to me adequate, but it comforted me a little, particularly when Edna swore solemnly that no one else at the table laughed from any deeper motive than mere silliness. "You're too self-conscious," said Edna.

"Self-conscious!" Goodness! but I didn't argue any further, for through my bedroom window came the enticing sound of men and women's voices, as the house-party people went trailing off in twos through the moonlit garden and orchard. Contrary to society fiction, I find that most young married people like to go twining off with their own mates, and I began to feel a little bit lonesome, and sorry I hadn't married, when Harold's voice shouted up from the piazza:

"Edna, hurry, there won't be a canoe left if you don't hurry: E-d-n-a, Pritchard wants to take Gladys with *him*; tell her to hurry."

Then I sat down again on the bed

and began to cry. "I won't go," I declared. "*I h-a-t-e* Mr. Pritchard. *I d-e-s-p-i-s-e* him! Go canoeing? This moonlight night? With *him*? *A-l-o-n-e*? Never!" And I jumped up and stamped my foot like a vixen.

Edna's eyes stuck out of her head with astonishment.

"Oh, Edna, Edna," I pleaded, "you go with Mr. Pritchard, and let me go with your husband."

"Well, I guess not," bridled Edna; "I'll go with my own husband, thank you!"

And then, as I was frantically wondering what to do next, there came an imperative rap on the door, and, in answer to Edna's reckless "Come in," Harold and Mr. Pritchard appeared on the threshold.

"Why, what's the matter with Gladys?" Harold exclaimed.

"I've got a headache! I've sprained my ankle! I've had bad news from home! I'm going to bed!" I explained just as fast as I could get the words out of my mouth.

And then—I don't know what happened or how it was done, but the first thing I knew a strong pair of arms picked me up and carried me, laughing, crying and kicking down the broad front stairs, with Edna and Harold screaming joyously in the rear. I lost both my slippers, but no one paid the slightest attention, and in a mingled ecstasy of shame and pride I found myself deposited at last in the luxurious bow of a cedar canoe, gliding softly down the black and silver waters of the little stream. We were only fifteen minutes behind the others, but not a single sound of chunking paddles came to us through the silence, though 'way off in the distance some extraordinarily two-handed person was tinkling a sweet mandolin. I don't know what became of Edna and Harold.

I never saw such a night before, and I never want to see such a night again. It was a miracle of molten moonlight, with shadows like velvet and a sweetness that was suffocating—clematis, wild roses—heaven knows what! And every thought that only smoldered in

my own mind flamed up before me in the eager eyes of my companion. It was like seeing my own soul through a magnifying-glass.

Yet, keen as I was, I could not find a word to break the spell of silence, and we must have paddled for a whole mile without other sound than the little trickle of the water at the bow of the canoe.

Fayall Pritchard paddled like an Indian, stealthily, and watched me furtively, as an Indian might have watched his captive. And I never took my eyes off him. And I was frightened. And I loved it!

Out of the shadows we glided into a veritable lake of light, and as I straightened up with a little gasp of ecstasy, he brought the canoe to a full stop and trickled the moonlit water off the blade of his paddle; there was not a soul to be seen or heard from black bank or white meadow.

"It is—like the Garden of Eden," he whispered.

Instinctively I thought of my naked, silk-stockinged feet and tucked them frantically under my skirts; and we both laughed and the spell was broken.

"You are more beautiful than your picture," he persisted, and foolishly I asked, "What picture?" He opened his pocketbook and held up to my view the photograph I had given Edna.

What was the use of subterfuge? What was the use of anything? This man knew my thoughts before I thought them. He felt my feelings. He loved my loves. He hated my hates. He didn't have to tell me all this. I *knew* it. We were *mates*.

"Do you know why I came North this summer?" he probed.

"Yes," I answered. I was clay in his hands.

"Did you know it before you saw me?"

"Yes," I acknowledged.

Slowly the slim canoe drifted into the river bank and nestled comfortably among the bushes.

The man dropped his paddle and slid himself along the narrow floor to my feet.

"Did you come to this party because you wanted to see me?" he queried tersely.

I nodded my head.

"What were you going to do if you didn't like me?"

I laughed; that was an easy one. "If I didn't like you? Why, I was just going to stay."

He looked puzzled. "Well, what were you going to do if you did like me?"

His great eyes blazed like a tiger's in the dark, and I jumped to my feet. "If I did like you? If I did like you?" I gasped, "I was going to run away," and I made a spring for the shore.

"Run away?" he laughed, "in your stocking feet?" and he jumped and caught me boldly as I started up the bank. I cannot altogether blame him that he caught me boldly; my flight was certainly a shameless confession, but he need not have taken such definite advantage of my information.

It was two o'clock when we got home. There was so much to talk about. And all the other people had gone to bed. I was almost glad to find the piazzas empty, for that man, that man wouldn't let me walk from the boat-house to the steps, though I had boasted a dozen pairs of silk stockings.

"Did anyone ever carry you before?" he asked trenchantly.

"No," I acknowledged joyfully; "I asked Paul to once, but he said I was too heavy."

"Heavy?" he exclaimed, and tossed me to his shoulder. "Who's Paul?"

"Oh, Paul," I acknowledged airily, "is a man I used to be engaged to. Do you care?"

"No, I don't care," said Fayall; "I'm rather glad. I've got a story, too, but it isn't as trig as yours. I've got a wife—that is, I've been married but am divorced. Do you care?"

"No, I don't care," I said. "Nothing was ever real before. There's nothing real in all the world tonight, but just Fayall Pritchard and Gladys Gaylord. Good night."

My bedroom seemed like a prison house, all wood and wall-paper and

electric lights and silver hair-brushes, and a horrid, chatterbox telephone at the side of my bed. That man Harold Blunt would tame the moon if he could get a wire to it. Everything in sight conventional except the hour—two o'clock—and me. Grandmother says I have no sense of propriety. She is quite wrong. Sense of impropriety is what I lack.

It was a wicked night to go to sleep, so fair and white, and absolutely matchless, but at last I crept into bed, and was just asleep when the little chatterbox at my side tinkled softly. I reached out curiously and took the receiver off and listened. "Is that you, Gladys?" I heard quite distinctly.

"Why, Fayall Pritchard," I gasped, "is that you? I thought it was a long distance phone. What do you mean?"

"I mean good night," said that audacious man, "and it's the longest distance phone I ever talked through—"

I rang him off! How dared he? And I got up and put on a wrapper and read a book until almost four o'clock.

Edna came in at eight and roused me vigorously from sleep. Her eyes were full of laughter. "Did you have a good time last night?" she quizzed. "And what do you think of our Mr. Pritchard?"

I felt irritable. "He isn't your Mr. Pritchard," I snapped, "he's my Mr. Pritchard."

Edna's expression was delicious to see. But she kept her temper and repeated, "What do you think of him?"

"I think—" I stammered—"I think—that if he lived on the North Pole and I lived on the South Pole, and there was no one else on earth *it would seem crowded*. That's what I think of him!"

"Oh," said Edna, with mock displeasure, "I'm so sorry. I hoped you would like him."

"Like him!" I exclaimed, "I hate him! But like him or hate him, it doesn't make any difference—I'm going to marry him!"

Edna staggered up against the wall. "Why, Gladys G-a-y-l-o-r-d," she gasped. "Marry him? And you haven't known him thirteen hours."

"I can't help the thirteen hours," I explained, with growing interest in the situation. "I'll bet I know him better in thirteen hours than you'd know him in thirteen years. He was born in Maryland. He's thirty-five years old. He's six feet one. He weighs a hundred and ninety-four—thirty pounds more than Paul. He's got a divorced wife down in Abyssinia or somewhere. She's probably a native with a ring through her nose. I forgot to ask. He's got a brother in jail and a sister who's interested in Chinese missions. He's been in every State and city in the world except Bangor, Maine. He'll reach there about October the first with a frock coat and a best man. He's got an invested income of seven thousand a year, and he more than doubles that sometimes by doing stunts for people who'd rather stay at home. He's the biggest, darkest, ugliest man I ever saw. He's the only man I ever knew who could surprise me, who could get to a place before I did and be waiting for me. He knows by experience every thought I've ever thought of. He knows my dreams by their first names. He's full moon. He's high noon. He's a lightning bolt. He's a volcano. He's everything that makes Paul seem like a tallow dip!"

"I don't like him! I don't love him! I don't deliberately choose to marry him! But he says I'm going to and I suppose I've got to. *He's my kind of man!*"

I stopped for breath, and Edna reeled over to the chatterbox, manipulated a few keys, and called down to the dining-room: "Don't wait breakfast for us, Harold. I'm helping Gladys."

"I've nothing more to tell," I announced emphatically, rushing at once to the task of getting dressed. Then I put on my stiffest, starchiest, stick-outest white piqué gown and went down to breakfast, looking as though a light-minded word would defile me.

Fayall Pritchard was all in white, too—of course he was, and from somewhere—goodness knows how, there was a huge bunch of pink water-lilies at my plate.

July 1905

It was a gay breakfast. Everybody jollied everybody about the night before, and from the ardor and scope of the insinuations it was perfectly evident that each couple feared they were the last ones in. But Fayall and I sat like blameless children and ate our melons and sipped our coffee with guilelessness and elegance.

After breakfast we all plunged into tennis, and after tennis into the gayest two weeks and four days that I ever spent in my life. We walked, we rode, we drove, we canoed, we steam-launched, we waded, we swam, we danced, we played cards, puss-in-the-corner, hide-and-go-seek—everything. We had a masquerade party, an amateur circus, a camp-meeting, a wake. We rollicked from morning till night, and from night till morning. It was like living, eating, sleeping, in an automobile at full tilt.

Fayall Pritchard and I were almost inseparable. He sent me pink flowers, lilies, roses, English daisies. He kept me supplied with books and magazines and candy. He took me everywhere and got furious if anyone else got in the way. He was jealous to the delicious point of insanity, and he filled my life brimming over with *himself*. He courted me the identical way that I would have courted a girl!

Why, I used in the old days to scribble tearful pages of the things I *wished* Paul would do and say, but I could have filled volumes with the surprises that Fayall Pritchard brought to me. I hadn't a thought or a desire that he didn't forestall, and he took the little scary, whispery things I thought in the dark and said them right out loud. He was a searchlight. And if he sometimes made me feel as though I hadn't any eyelids on, the sensation was startling enough to be interesting.

As I say, we were almost inseparable. The Washington girl and the young architect, a little bored with each other, tagged us assiduously at first, but gave up after two days and left us to our own devices. Gradually everybody left us to our own devices.

They thought they saw a budding romance. Budding? Good heavens! It was full-blown the day we met. People were very considerate. But looking back on that party, I find I cannot remember a single face except Edna's, Harold's and Fayall Pritchard's, though I can almost constantly recall the Washington girl's voice spooning over the Government.

I lived altogether in such a whirl of excitement and emotion that I wonder now how I ever kept soul and body together, for even the nights were destitute of rest. Just as sure as I closed my eyes to sleep, the little chatterbox bell would tinkle close to my ear and there would be Fayall ready to make telephone love for a half-hour at a time. It was an awfully easy way to talk and listen, but it gave me the most thrillingly clandestine feeling that I've ever had in my life. Things like that wear on you.

At the end of two weeks Fayall Pritchard went away on business, to be gone several days. His going left me with a very natural sense of isolation and neglect. It was the first low tide I had seen for two weeks, and I appreciated all the more that Fayall's divorced wife, and a few other incidentals, were humped rather conspicuously in the sand. I wished he would come back with a swoop and a rush that would carry everything before it. So I was wild with delight when he telegraphed on Thursday that he would be back for breakfast Friday morning.

Instead of that, however, he came Thursday night, late, so late that we were all in bed and asleep. About three o'clock I heard the chatterbox tinkle. It frightened me fearfully and set my heart pounding. Then I laughed and wondered if anyone else had discovered the little scheme—perhaps the Washington girl and the young architect were discussing the plans of the Congressional Library. But tinkle, tinkle, went the bell. No one had answered it. I sat up sleepily and took the receiver.

"What is it?" I whispered.

"It's I," came Fayall Pritchard's voice, deep and dark and strangely ominous. "It's I. I came back earlier than I expected. I just thought I'd wake you up and tell you that we are going to be married tomorrow——"

The receiver tumbled from my hand and hit the side of the wall with a terrible bump. I fumbled for it several seconds in the dark before I could find it and put it to my burning ear.

"M-a-r-r-i-e-d tomorrow?" I gasped.

"Of course," came the emphatic answer. "There's no use waiting. You're estranged from your grandmother, so there's no one to consult. And I've got a splendid chance to go to Peru. We'll start Sunday night. And we'll be married tomorrow."

This was no high tide. This was a tidal wave—a cyclone.

"Oh, no," I said, "I can't be married tomorrow. I don't want to be married tomorrow. I don't want to be married ever—yet. Think how young I am—I'm only twenty-five, I'm——"

"We're going to be married tomorrow," said Fayall Pritchard. There was a glint in his voice that was not pleasant. I had heard it once before, and I knew just how his eyes gleamed when he said it.

"I won't be married tomorrow," I retorted, and I hit the wall hard with my fist, hoping he'd think I'd stamped my foot—though, come to think of it, I never could walk on the wall.

"You *will* be married tomorrow," he persisted; "you'll be married tomorrow at four o'clock, June the twenty-seventh—I put the date down in my notebook six months ago, when I first heard of you and this Peru trip."

Suddenly the telephone bell jangled stridently in my ear. "For heaven's sake," came Harold's impatient voice, "for heaven's sake, who's monkeying with this telephone? I've been trying to get the stables for half an hour!" His voice muffled suddenly as though he had turned away, and I heard a faint, "Edna, Edna, people are talking through this 'phone, talking about marriage, quarreling or something.

Who is it? Who in thunder can it be? Why, it's three o'clock in the morning!"

I hung the receiver up like mad, and jumped out of bed. Guyed by Harold, and married by Fayall? Well, I guessed not. And in less than ten minutes I was dressed, hatted and coated, had thrust a few things into a hand-bag, and was scrambling down the back stairs.

When I stubbed my toe on the dark steps I soothed it with, "I *won't* be married tomorrow." When the key to the back door balked in its lock I encouraged myself with, "I *won't* be married tomorrow." When my breathless run to the station threatened to tear my lungs in two I still had breath to mutter through blue lips, "I *won't* be married tomorrow," and at last when I was fortunate enough to catch a milk train and huddle myself into the dirty velvet seat of the rear and only passenger-car, the engine started off ostentatiously puffing, "We *won't* be married tomorrow. We *won't* be married tomorrow."

"It isn't stage fright, either," I explained to myself. "I don't want to marry Fayall Pritchard, and, what's more, I *won't*. And, what's more, I'm going home to Bangor to forgive my grandmother. You don't run away from a man when you like him. It's hating him that makes you want to run." I gazed trustfully at my stoutly shod feet. "This is no silk-stockinged or silver-buckled escape. This is the *real thing*."

"You wouldn't let a brigand get on this train, would you?" I asked the conductor timidly when he came for my ticket, and if I hadn't immediately recovered myself and smiled with ill-managed facetiousness I probably should have been thrown off at the next station. Life is full of escapes as well as accidents.

The journey home was intolerable. I was almost dead with weariness and fright when I reached Bangor. I thought if I only could get home be-

fore Fayall Pritchard caught me, someone—the church, the police, the Young Women's Christian Association, grandmother, someone—would save me from being married against my will. Grandmother would know at once that it wasn't proper. Grandmother always knew at once when things weren't proper.

I was dazed. I was dumb. I was half mad. When I reached the gate of my grandmother's driveway a strange gardener was cutting the grass. It did not surprise me. He told me my grandmother had gone automobiling with the new minister, and that she was going to marry the new minister. It did not surprise me. A new maid answered my ring at the door-bell. It did not surprise me. The hallway was entirely rebuilt and refurnished. It did not surprise me. I wouldn't have been surprised to find the floors spread with jam instead of carpets. *Nothing* could have surprised me. I was not even surprised when I dragged myself into the drawing-room and found Paul standing on the Persian rug just where I had left him two years ago.

His back was toward me and I tiptoed up behind him and blew boisterously at the expected dust on his shoulders.

He turned quickly and saw me. It was a crucial moment. I braced myself for a shock, but he merely put his hands in his pockets and laughed—laughed like sunshine on a winter day.

"Oh, ho!" he said, "so it's you? I thought you'd circle back this way if I waited long enough."

"That's the way they hunt rabbits," I demurred.

"Oh, yes," he acknowledged, "lots of fleet and harmless things travel in a circle."

"It was a pretty big circle, and I've learned an awful lot," I said with bitter significance.

He winced at my words—not very much, but about as much as an elephant would if you made a face at him.

"Learned an awful lot?" he repeated. "I'm sorry for that. You knew too much already."

"Yes," I continued, ignoring his comment, "it was a pretty big circle, and I'm not fleet and I'm not harmless; I'm just a poor, tired woman come home to die."

"Heavens!" said Paul. "Is it as bad as that? Well, don't die standing up," and he pushed a Morris chair toward me, and I sank into it very gratefully.

"You can laugh all you want to," I murmured wearily, "but life is a horribly tedious thing, and—I think I've got heart-trouble."

Then Paul looked at me almost keenly, and said the only clever thing I ever heard him say. "Oh, ho, little girl," he said, "people who run up life two steps at a time must blame the running, and not life itself, for their heart-disease."

I clapped my hands with delight. Then suddenly I actually did get a little bit faint and white, and Paul jumped for a fan and sat down on the arm of my chair and began to fan me quite nicely.

"I am so tired," I sighed.

"Was the journey terribly bad?" said Paul; "let me get you a glass of wine."

"Oh, no, I'm not tired like that," I explained; "it's my temperament that's tired. I'm so tired of being duplicated. I'm so tired of living in tropical vegetation. Do you know of any cold, barren, perfectly arid waste, where I could lie down for eight or ten years and rest my temperament?"

Paul looked dismayed. "Why, Gladys Gaylord," he exclaimed, "your grandmother said you'd been visiting in Connecticut! There's no tropical vegetation in Connecticut!"

"Oh, yes, there is, Paul," I argued. "There's the rankest tropical vegetation in Connecticut of any State in the Union. But never mind, I want to talk to you. Paul, do you know my thoughts before I've thought them?"

"No," said Paul, "nor even after you've explained them."

"U-m," said I. "Paul, have you *done* all the things, good or bad, that I've ever dreamed of night or day?"

"No," said Paul, "I hope not."

"U-m," said I: "Paul, have you read everything that I've ever read in my life and loved it to distraction?"

"No," said Paul reluctantly; "nothing except the Sunday papers."

"U-m," said I. "Paul, would you go 'way off and live in a place like Peru, where they have wild animals on the postage stamps, instead of people whom you know?"

"No," said Paul. "I might go to Boston once or twice, but——"

"U-m," said I. "Paul, would you marry me if I didn't want to?"

"No," said Paul; "I certainly wouldn't."

"U-m," said I. "But, Paul, there's a man down in Connecticut who would."

"Damn the man in Connecticut!" said Paul.

"U-m," said I. "But, Paul, I was engaged to him for two weeks and three days."

"Damn the two weeks and three days!" said Paul, fanning furiously.

"U-m," said I. "But, Paul, he kissed me pretty often and quite hard, and I kissed him once or twice——"

"Damn!" said Paul.

"Stop fanning so hard!" I cried. "You're skinning my nose."

Paul dropped the fan in my lap and took both my hands in his cool ones; "I'm not quite as slow as I was when you went away," he laughed.

"Oh, aren't you?" I cried. "I'm so disappointed. I hoped you would be."

Paul's eyes danced—not a round dance, but a sort of Virginia reel, dignified and slow.

"You mustn't hold my hands," I protested; "the man from Connecticut is coming to marry me."

"You'll have two husbands, then," said Paul.

"Oh, no," I cried, "that would be bigamy!"

"Pigamy, I should think," said Paul fatuously. "Weren't we silly?"

Then the striking of a clock joggled me back to serious things.

I like to talk to Paul. It's like throwing a ball against the side of a

house. Your ball comes back 'most every time, but the side of the house stays where it belongs. If you get hurt it's your own fault.

"Paul," I said, "you promised you wouldn't marry me if I didn't want to. Does that mean that you would marry me if I did want to?"

"Yes," said Paul, quite simply; "that's just what it means."

"Well," I acknowledged, "perhaps I'll marry you just as soon as grandmother and her minister come home

from their ride, if you won't urge or insist or make any fuss about it."

Paul smiled divinely.

"I believe I'm going to kiss you," he said.

"Don't hurry," I suggested, with a flicker of sarcasm.

Paul laughed. "Thank you, I won't hurry," he said. And he didn't.

Grandmother and her minister came home and found us. We surprised them a good deal, but we didn't surprise them half so much as they surprised us!



THE DAY MOON

THE little, loitering waves that sought the shore
 Recked not of her; the listless leagues of sand
 That zone the green girth of the noontide land
 Espied her not; the fisher at his oar,
 The children romping round his wind-swept door,
 The driftwood-gatherer, bent with toil, and tanned
 With dazzling days innumerable, and
 The ships far-faring o'er the sea's blue floor—
 None saw that heavenly lamp hung high and free,
 Pale sister to the pulsing sun—save me.
 And I was minded of that life of thine,
 That shines as softly and unheededly,
 O Sweet, save for this watchful love of mine—
 My Day Moon, fairest of all orbs that be!

JESSIE STORRS FERRIS.



A WONDER

"IS the new member of our sewing-class a rapid seamstress?"
 "Well, she makes about sixty knots an hour."



ENOUGH SAID

"IS her husband kind?"
 "Well, he married her."

HIS LADY TO RONSARD

By Virginia Woodward Cloud

PERCHANCE thyself shall sit one night,
 Beside Time's ashes gray,
 With ancient cronies, candlelight,
 A jest, a toast and play,
 And one more curious than the rest
 Will say, "*Mon cher*, yon ember
 Invites you toast the one loved best
 If you, alas, remember!"

And you? Sad smile and twirl of lace—
 "*Mon ami*, you are wise!
 I sang to many a maiden's face,
 I swore by Beauty's eyes;
 But they I loved—nay, all life's lures
 Tested, as then behooved me,
 Are gone. The memory which endures
 Is—there was one who loved me!"

With shrug and smile those cronies then
 Will ask if you forget
 Fair Marguerite, Marie or Jeanne,
 Celeste or Antoinette.
 And you, "'Tis true, in memory
 A face I might recover.
 Messieurs, youth is but folly, I,
 Perchance, was each one's lover.

"I loved and gave when life was flame,
 I laughed and lavished all,
 What matter now if face or name
 Is far beyond recall?
 'Tis night, *mes amis*, I am old,
 Time's foil has found and proved me,
 But one drop in life's cup, I hold,
 'Tis—there was one who loved me!"

*Heart of my life, in some dusk's dream
 When Time has far removed you,
 Bid Memory, dove-winged, span night's stream
 With a thought of one who loved you!*

PREMIER JEUDI

Par J. Marni

LA salle à manger d'un modeste pavillon, à Nogent-sur-Marne. Midi, en hiver; un feu de coke assez vif brûle dans la grille de la cheminée. Par une baie sans rideaux on aperçoit la campagne dormant sous la neige.

MME DELMAT, 34 ans; ARMANDE, 13 ans; TOINETTE, 20 ans.

MME DELMAT est une grande femme mince, brune et jolie, avec de longs yeux gris aux paupières bistrées. Vêtue d'une robe de chambre en étoffe sombre, les épaules garanties par un petit châle de laine blanche, elle se tient debout dans le corridor, à la porte de la salle à manger, guettant l'arrivée d'ARMANDE que TOINETTE, la bonne, a été chercher à la gare. Un bruit de pas et de voix, quelques marches grimpées à la hâte, une porte poussée par une main impatiente, et ARMANDE apparaît, suivie de TOINETTE.

ARMANDE (sautant au cou de MME DELMAT)—Maman! maman? Bonjour, ma petite mère! Bonjour, ma petite maman!

MME DELMAT—Bonjour, Mandette! Bonjour, ma jolie! Bonjour, mon petit enfant chéri! (Elle la couvre de baisers.) Mon petit Frise-Poulet! Tu es en retard! Il n'est rien arrivé? Pas d'accident?

ARMANDE—Rien, mère, rien du tout.

MME DELMAT—Tu n'as pas eu peur, toute seule, en wagon?

ARMANDE—J'étais dans le compartiment des dames.

MME DELMAT (examinant ARMANDE)—Tu as bonne mine. Comment! tu as mis ta robe bleue et ton chapeau neuf, par ce vilain temps?

ARMANDE—Il ne fallait pas? J'aurais dû mettre mon costume gris et ma vieille toque noire, peut-être?

MME DELMAT—Evidemment, ma chérie.

ARMANDE—Je m'en doutais! Mais je ne sais pas, moi, tu comprends, mère; je ne sais pas... je n'ai pas encore l'habitude... (Elle lui montre ses chaussures.) C'est comme pour mes bottines... J'ai mis mes grosses, à double semelle, est-ce bien?

MME DELMAT—Très bien! (Elle soulève légèrement le bord de la robe d'ARMANDE.) Quel jupon as-tu? Un jupon ouaté? Oui! A la bonne heure! (Elle embrasse sa fille.) Tu es un sage petit Frise-Poulet chéri à sa maman!

Elle appelle TOINETTE

TOINETTE (entrant)—Madame!

MME DELMAT (lui donnant le chapeau et le manteau d'ARMANDE)—Tenez, emportez ça sur mon lit, dans ma chambre, et servez-nous aussitôt que ce sera prêt.

TOINETTE—Oui, Madame.

MME DELMAT (s'asseyant à table)—Tu dois mourir de faim, mon trésor?

ARMANDE—Non! Je suis trop contente! Ça me coupe l'appétit! (Elle s'assied en face de sa mère et regarde autour de la pièce.) Oh! comme c'est petit ici, maman! En comparaison de...

Elle s'arrête et rougit

MME DELMAT (ton gêné)—Pour le prix que je pouvais y mettre, je n'ai rien trouvé de mieux. Mais il y a une jolie vue... Et puis, au printemps, le

jardin est, paraît-il, rempli de violettes. Je te montrerai le jardin après déjeuner.

ARMANDE (*d'une voix basse et songeuse*) — Au printemps! C'est encore bien loin, le printemps!

Elle jette un triste regard sur le ciel livide qui s'élève au-dessus des champs blafards et désolés.

MME DELMAT — Mais non, c'est dans trois mois.

ARMANDE — Trois mois? (*Réfléchissant.*) Douze jeudis!... Je n'aurai que douze jeudis pour te voir avant le printemps, alors?

Elle soupire profondément et détourne la tête. Elle ressemble à sa mère. Très grande, très développée pour son âge, elle a, comme MME DELMAT, de lourds cheveux noirs, un teint pâle et des yeux pensifs sous des paupières bistrées.

MME DELMAT — Ah! voilà le déjeuner. (*Elle prend le plat que TOINETTE vient de poser sur la table et elle sert sa fille.*) Ce sont des œufs brouillés aux cèpes. J'ai fait mettre une toute petite pointe d'ail. Oh! presque rien, pour toi. Tiens!

ARMANDE — Merci! (*Elles mangent en silence pendant une minute.*) Ils sont très bons, ces œufs; Maria ne les fait pas aussi bien.

MME DELMAT — Maria est donc toujours à la maison?

ARMANDE — Oui, mère.

MME DELMAT — Je croyais que ton père devait la renvoyer.

ARMANDE — Il a changé d'avis, ou plutôt... (*Elle hésite.*) C'est moi qui ai demandé à père de la garder.

MME DELMAT — Pourquoi?

ARMANDE — Parce que... Oh! mère! parce qu'elle t'aime bien, et que, avec elle, je peux parler de toi, tout le temps... C'est... c'est la seule personne, à présent, avec qui je puisse parler de toi!

MME DELMAT (*pâle*) — Ton père ne prononce jamais mon nom?

ARMANDE — Jamais.

Elle baisse les yeux. Long silence. TOINETTE apporte un autre plat, puis elle sort.

MME DELMAT — Veux-tu un peu de rosbif?

ARMANDE — Non, merci.

MME DELMAT (*doucement*) — Un peu, ma chérie, je t'en prie! manges-en un peu. Je l'ai fait faire pour toi, tu l'adores!

ARMANDE — Alors très, très peu, s'il te plaît!

MME DELMAT lui découpe une tranche au milieu du rosbif, recouvre la tranche de jus saignant et lui donne son assiette. Pour elle, elle prend un morceau quelconque; toutes les deux essaient de manger.

MME DELMAT — Il est tendre, n'est-ce pas?

ARMANDE — Très tendre. On a de la bonne viande dans ce pays-ci.

MME DELMAT — Et meilleur marché qu'à Paris.

ARMANDE — Vraiment?

MME DELMAT — Oui.

Silence

MME DELMAT (*timidement, sans regarder ARMANDE*) — Ainsi, Maria te parle de moi? Qu'est-ce qu'elle te dit?

ARMANDE — Elle me dit la seule chose qui puisse me consoler; elle me dit que tu reviendras à la maison.

MME DELMAT (*le visage pourpre*) — Elle dit ça!

ARMANDE — Oui! c'est triste à la maison, va! Il semble qu'il y ait quelqu'un de mort!... Je ne peux pas entrer dans ta chambre sans pleurer... et, à table, dans cette grande salle à manger, quand je vois ton petit tabouret en soie verte et blanche, sous ta place, ta place où père veut je me mette à présent, je laisse tomber ma serviette par terre, exprès, pour me pencher sur ton petit tabouret et l'embrasser. (*La voix pleine de larmes.*) C'est vrai, ça me fait plaisir de l'embrasser, ton petit tabouret!

MME DELMAT, les traits convulsés, veut répondre, mais TOINETTE entre portant des légumes et le saladier. Cependant qu'elle fait le service, les deux femmes se taisent. Aussitôt que TOINETTE est hors de la pièce MME DELMAT éclate en sanglots.

ARMANDE (*elle se lève précipitamment et se jette aux genoux de sa mère*) — Pardon, pardon, maman! Ne pleure

pas! Je t'en supplie! ne pleure pas! Je n'ai pas voulu te faire de la peine!... Maman! maman! réponds-moi! (*Elle essaie de lui écarter les mains de la figure.*) Réponds-moi! dis-moi que tu ne crois pas que je veuille te faire de la peine!... mère chérie! petite mère! mère aimée!

MME DELMAT—Non!... non, mon petit... Non! ce n'est pas pour ça... C'est... c'est autre chose! C'est... tu ne peux pas comprendre..., vois-tu! Plus tard, plus tard, quand tu seras femme... tu me comprendras... tu me pardonneras... Tu verras!... tu me pardonneras! La vie... la vie avec ses mensonges, ses hypocrisies, ses lâchetés te fera horreur!... Et, alors, tu te souviendras et... et tu penseras: Pauvre maman! Elle n'a pas su, elle n'a pas pu tromper, trahir, elle! Elle a préféré tout quitter... tout briser!... Elle... elle a... (*Elle sanglote si désespérément qu'elle ne peut pas continuer.*)

ARMANDE—Oui... oui! Je sais, va! je comprends... je comprends... déjà!... oui!... je comprends!... Mais... mais... un jour... dans bien longtemps... lorsque tu... lorsqu'il... Enfin si tu es malheureuse et si père te demande de revenir à la maison, tu reviendras, dis? Tu reviendras pour ta petite Mandette, pour ton petit Frise-Poulet chéri?

MME DELMAT (*étreignant sa fille dans ses bras*)—Ma petite fille!

ARMANDE—Oui, ta petite fille, à toi! qui s'ennuie tant de sa maman! Songe, mère! Une fois par semaine! Te voir une fois par semaine, le jeudi, seulement! Je t'assure, chérie, que ce n'est pas assez! Quand père m'a dit: "Tu iras chez ta mère tous les jeudis," j'ai répondu: "Père, ce n'est pas assez!"

TOINETTE (*entrant brusquement*)—Voilà la tarte pour mademoiselle.

ARMANDE *se relève très vite et se rassied à sa place.* MME DELMAT *aussi tâche de se faire une contenance.*

MME DELMAT (*à TOINETTE*)—Malheureusement, mademoiselle n'a plus faim.

ARMANDE—C'est toi qui as fait cette tarte, maman?

MME DELMAT—Oui, j'espérais que tu en mangerais volontiers... et...

ARMANDE—Donne-m'en un petit morceau. (*Elle tend son assiette.*) J'emporterai le reste, si tu veux, ce soir, quand je m'en irai...

MME DELMAT—Mais, ce soir, tu dînes avec moi, mon mignon, n'est-ce pas?

ARMANDE—Non! (*Elle attend que TOINETTE soit sortie.*) Père a dit que, pour ce premier jeudi, je déjeunerai seulement. Il viendra me chercher à la gare de l'Est, à six heures.

MME DELMAT (*courbant la tête*)—Ah!...



NO FAMILY SKELETON

COBWIGGER—How is it that it takes three generations to make a gentleman?
MERRIT—You see, the people who knew how your grandfather made his money are all dead by that time.



SAVED

MAY—Why did Jack break off his engagement with Nell?

PAMELA—He went to church with her one Sunday, and the fervor with which she sang "Oh, that I had a thousand tongues" scared him.

A BALLADE OF BROADWAY

SOME love a garden gay
 Where brilliant blossoms blow;
 Some love a shaded way
 Where leafy lindens grow.
 Some love the valleys low,
 And some the mountains' height;
 I love the passing show
 Along Broadway at night.

I love the gay display,
 The dashing belle and beau;
 The carriage and coupé,
 The jingling car. And, oh,
 The jostling to and fro,
 The dazzling life and light!
 Give me the glare and glow
 Along Broadway at night.

The moving scenes portray
 Alternate joy and woe;
 Our hearts beneath its sway
 Respond with thrill or throe.
 Ah, nothing that I know
 Compares in sound or sight
 With the great ebb and flow
 Along Broadway at night.

L'ENVOI

Prince, you have your chateau,
 With marble terrace white;
 But I would rather go
 Along Broadway at night.

CAROLYN WELLS.



PUT HIM OUT OF BUSINESS

TED—Ambition was his ruin.

NED—No wonder. It was his wife who had the ambition.

A DRESS REHEARSAL

By Harold MacGrath

IT was Carrington's habit invariably—when no business or social engagement pressed him to go elsewhere—to drop into a certain quaint little French restaurant just off Broadway for his dinners. It was out of the way; the throb and rattle of the great commercial artery became like the far-off murmur of the sea, restful rather than annoying. He always made it a point to dine alone, undisturbed. The proprietor nor his silent-footed waiters had the slightest idea who Carrington was. To them he was simply a profitable customer who signified that he dined there in order to be alone. His table was upstairs. Below there was the usual dinner crowd till theatre-time; and the music had the faculty of luring his thoughts astray, being as he was more fond of melody than of work. As a matter of fact, it was in this little restaurant that he winnowed the day's ideas, revamped scenes, trimmed the rough edges of his climaxes, revised this epigram or rejected this or that line; all on the margins of newspapers and on the backs of envelopes. In his den at his bachelor apartments he worked; but here he dreamed, usually behind the soothing, opalescent veil of Madame Nicotine.

What a marvelous thing a good after-dinner cigar is! In the smoke of it the poor man sees his ships come in, the poet sees his muse beckoning with hands full of largess, the millionaire reverts to his early struggles, and the lover sees his divinity in a thousand graceful poses.

Tonight, however, Carrington's cigar was without magic. He was out

of sorts. Things had gone wrong at the rehearsal that morning. The star had demanded the removal of certain lines which gave the leading man an opportunity to shine in the climax of the third act. He had labored a whole month over this climax, and he revolted at the thought of changing it to suit the whim of a capricious woman.

Everybody had agreed that this climax was the best the dramatist had yet constructed. A critic who had been invited to a reading had declared that it lacked little of being great. And at this late hour the star wanted it changed so as to bring her alone in the limelight! It was preposterous. As Carrington was a successful dramatist, exceedingly popular, the business-manager and the stage-manager both agreed to leave the matter wholly in the dramatist's hands. So he resolutely declined to make a single alteration in the scene. There was a storm. The star declared that if the change was not made at once she would leave the company. In making this declaration she knew her strength. There was not another actress of her ability to be found; the season was too late. There was not another woman available, nor would any other manager lend one. As the opening performance was but two weeks hence, you will realize why Carrington's mood this night was anything but amiable.

He scowled at his cigar. There was always something, some sacrifice to make, and seldom for art's sake. It is all very well to witness a play from the other side of the footlights; everything appears to work out so smoothly,

easily and without effort. To this phenomenon is due the amateur dramatist—because it looks simple. A play is not written; it is built, like a house. In most cases the dramatist is simply the architect. The novelist has comparatively an easy road to travel. The dramatist is beset on all sides, now the business-manager—that is to say, the box-office—now the stage-manager, now the star, now the leading man or woman. Jealousy's green eyes peer from all sides. The dramatist's ideal, when finally presented to the public, resembles those mutilated marbles that decorate the museums of Rome and Florence. Only there is this difference: the public can easily imagine what the sculptor was about, but never the dramatist.

Carrington was a young man, tolerably good-looking, noticeably well built. When they have good features, a cleft chin and a manly nose I like to see your clean-shaven men. He had fine eyes, in the corners of which always lurked mirth and mischief; for he possessed above all things an inexhaustible fund of dry humor. His lines seldom evoked rough laughter; rather silent chuckles. He had fought his way to the front by sheer persistence. He had loitered around the great managers' offices till they finally read a play to get rid of him. After that he had but little trouble.

The great manager is a natural-born coward. He continues to produce weaklings by well-known names because he fears to risk a dollar on an obscurity. But all the time he is waiting for his rival to make a discovery, to take the initial risk. Once a manager produces a play by a new author, his rivals rush in and try to outbid him. This is where the author comes in; that is, if he has a keen eye in examining a dramatic contract.

Carrington's scowl abated none. In business women were nuisances; they were always taking impossible stands. He would find some way out; he was determined not to submit to the imperious fancies of an actress, however famous she might be.

"Sir, will you aid a lady in distress?" The voice was tremulous but as rich in tone as the diapason of an organ.

Carrington looked up from his cigar to behold a beautiful young woman standing at the side of his table. Her round, smooth cheeks were flushed and on the lower lids of her splendid dark eyes tears of shame trembled and threatened to fall. Behind her stood a waiter, of impassive countenance, who was adding up the figures on a check, his movement full of suggestion.

The dramatist understood the situation at once. The young lady had ordered dinner, and having eaten it, found that she couldn't pay for it. It was, to say the least, a trite situation. But what can a man do when a beautiful woman approaches him and pleads for assistance? I defy any gentleman to extricate himself without positive rudeness. So Carrington rose.

"What may the trouble be?" he asked coldly, for all that he instantly recognized her to be a person of breeding and refinement.

"I—I have lost my purse, and I have no money to pay the waiter." She made this confession bravely and frankly.

Carrington looked about. They were alone. She interpreted his glance rather shrewdly.

"There were no women to appeal to. The waiter refused to accept my word, and I really can't blame him. I had no money to send a messenger to my home."

One of the trembling tears escaped and rolled down the blooming cheek. Carrington surrendered. He saw that this was an exceptional case. The girl was truly in distress. He knew his New York thoroughly; a man or woman without funds was treated with the finished cruelty with which the jovial Roman emperors amused themselves with the Christians. Lack of money in one person creates incredulity in another. A penniless person is invariably a liar and a thief. Only one sort of person is pitied in New York: the per-

son who has more money than she or he can possibly spend.

The girl fumbled in her hand-bag and produced a card which she gave to Carrington—"Elizabeth Challoner." He looked from the card to the girl, and then back to the card. The name, somehow, was not wholly unfamiliar, but at that moment he could not place it.

"Waiter, let me see the check," he said. It amounted to \$2.10. Carrington smiled. "Scarcely large enough to cause all this trouble," he said reassuringly; "I will attend to it."

The waiter bowed and retired. So long as the check was paid he did not care who paid it.

"Oh, it is so horribly embarrassing! What must you think of me!" She twisted her gloves with a nervous strength which threatened to rend them.

"May I give you a bit of friendly advice?"

She nodded, hiding the fall of the second tear.

"Well, never dine alone in public; at any rate, in the evening. It is not wise for a woman to do so. She subjects herself to any number of embarrassments."

She did not reply, and for a moment he believed that she was about to break down completely. He aimlessly brushed the cigar ashes from the tablecloth. He hated a scene in public. In the theatre it was different; it was a part of the petty round of business to have the leading lady burst into tears when things didn't suit her. What fools women were in general! But the girl surprised him by holding up determinedly, and sinking her white teeth into her lips to smother the sob which rose in her throat.

"Be seated," he said, drawing out the opposite chair.

A wave of alarm spread over her face. She clasped her hands.

"Sir, if you are a gentleman——"

Carrington interrupted her by giving her his card, which was addressed. She glanced at it through a blur of tears, then sat down. Carrington shrugged

slightly; his vanity was touched. There was, then, a young woman in New York who had not heard of Richard Carrington, celebrated as a dramatist?

"In asking you to be seated," he explained, "it was in order that you might wait in comfort while I despatched a messenger to your home. Doubtless you have a brother, a father, or some male relative, who will come to your assistance." Which proved that Carrington was prudent.

But instead of brightening as he expected she would, she straightened in her chair, while her eyes widened with horror, as if she saw something frightful in perspective.

What the deuce was the matter now, he wondered as he witnessed this inexplicable change.

"No, no! You must not send a messenger!" she protested.

"But——"

"No, no!" tears welling into her beautiful eyes again. They were beautiful, he was forced to admit.

"But," he persisted, "you wished the waiter to do so. I do not understand." His tone became formal again.

"I have reasons. Oh, heavens! I am the most miserable woman in all the world!" She suddenly bowed her head upon her hands and her shoulders rose and fell with silent sobs.

Carrington stared at her, dumfounded. Now what? He glanced cautiously around as if in search of some avenue of escape. The waiter, ever watchful, assumed that he was wanted, and made as though to approach the table; but Carrington warned him off. All distrust in the girl vanished. Decidedly she was in great trouble of some sort, and it wasn't because she could not pay a restaurant check. Women—and especially New York women—do not shed tears when a stranger offers to settle for their dinner checks.

"If you will kindly explain to me what the trouble is," visibly embarrassed, "perhaps I can help you. Have you run away from home?" he asked.

A negative nod.

"Are you married?"

Another negative nod.

Carrington scratched his chin.

"Have you—done anything—wrong?"

A decided negative shake of the head.

At any other time the gesticulation of the ostrich plume, so close to his face, would have amused him; but there was something eminently pathetic in the diaphragm which drifted toward him from the feather.

"Come, come; you may trust me thoroughly. If you are afraid to return home alone——"

He was interrupted by an affirmative nod this time. Possibly, he conjectured, the girl had started out to elope and had fortunately stopped at the brink.

"Will it help you at all if I go home with you?"

His ear caught a muffled "Yes."

Carrington beckoned to the waiter.

"Order a cab at once," he said.

The waiter hurried away, with visions of handsome tips.

Presently the girl raised her head and sat up. Her eyes, dark as shadows in still waters, glistened.

"Be perfectly frank with me; and if I can be of any service to you, do not hesitate to command me." He eyed her thoughtfully. Everything attached to her person suggested elegance. Her skin was as fine as vellum; her hair had a dash of golden bronze in it; her hands were white and shapely, and the horn on the tips of the fingers shone rosily. Now, what in the world was there to trouble a young woman who possessed these favors, who wore jewels on her fingers and sable on her shoulders? "Talk to me just as you would to a brother," he added.

"You will take this ring," she said irrelevantly. She slipped a fine sapphire from one of her fingers and pushed it across the table.

"And for what reason?" he cried.

"Security for my dinner. I cannot accept charity," with a hint of hauteur which did not in the least displease him.

"But, my dear young woman, I can-

not accept this ring. You have my address. You may send the sum whenever you please. I see no reason why, as soon as you arrive home, you cannot refund the small sum of two dollars and ten cents. It appears to me all very simple."

"There will be no one at home, not even the servants," wearily.

Carrington's brows came together. Was the girl fooling him, after all? But for what reason?

"You have me confused," he admitted. "I can do nothing blindly. Tell me what the trouble is."

"How can I tell you, an absolute stranger? It is all so frightful, and I am so young!"

Frightful? Young? He picked up his half-finished cigar, but immediately let it fall. He stole a look at his watch; it was seven.

"Oh, I know what you must think of me," despairingly. "Nobody believes in another's real misfortune in this horrid city. There are so many fraudulent methods used to obtain people's sympathies that everyone has lost trust. I had no money when I entered here; but outside it was so dark. Whenever I stopped, wondering where I should go, men turned and stared at me. Once a policeman stared into my face suspiciously. And I dared not return home, I dared not! No, no; I promise not to embarrass you with any more tears." She brushed her eyes with a rapid movement.

Carrington's success as a dramatist was due largely to his interest in all things that passed under his notice; nothing was too trivial to observe. The tragic threads of human life, which escaped the eyes of the passing many or were ignored by them, always aroused his interest and attention; and more than once he had picked up one of these threads and followed it to the end. Out of these seeming insignificant things he often built one of those breathless, nerve-gripping climaxes which had made him famous. In the present case he believed that he had stumbled upon

something worthy of his investigation. This beautiful girl, richly dressed, who dared not go home, who had rings but no money—there was some mystery surrounding her, and he determined to find out what it was. And then, besides, for all that he was worldly, he was young and still believed in his Keats.

"If, as you say, there is no one at your home, why do you fear to go there?" he asked, with some remnant of caution.

"It is the horror of the place," shuddering; "the horror!" And indeed, at that moment, her face expressed horror.

"Is it someone dead?" lowering his voice.

"Dead?" with a flash of cold anger in her eyes. "Yes—to me, to truth, to honor; dead to everything that should make life worth the living. Oh, it is impossible to say more in this place, to tell you here what has happened this day to rob me of all my tender illusions. This morning I awoke happy, my heart was light; now, nothing but shame and misery, shame and misery!" She hid her eyes for a space behind the back of her hand.

"I will take you home," he said simply.

"You trust me?"

"Why not? I am a man, and can easily take care of myself."

"Thank you!"

What a voice! It possessed a marvelous quality, low and penetrating, like the voices of great singers and actresses.

Here the waiter returned to announce that the cab awaited them below. Carrington paid the two checks, dropped a liberal tip, rose and got into his coat. The girl also rose, picked up his card, glanced carelessly at it, and put it into her handbag—a little gold-link affair worth many dinners. It was the voice and these evidences of wealth, more than anything else, that determined Carrington. Frauds were always perpetrated for money, and this exquisite creature had a comfortable fortune on her fingers.

Silently they left the restaurant, entered the cab, and went rolling out into Broadway. Carrington, repressing his curiosity, leaned back against the cushion. The girl looked dully ahead.

What manner of tragedy was about to unfold itself to his gaze?

II

THE house was situated Central Park West. It was of modern architecture; a residence such as only rich men can afford to build. It was in utter gloom; not a single light could be seen at any window. It looked as if indeed tragedy sat enthroned within. Carrington's spine wrinkled a bit as he got out of the cab and offered his hand to the girl.

Mute and mysterious as a sphinx, the girl walked to the steps, not even looking around to see if he was coming after her. Perhaps she knew the power of curiosity. Without hesitance she mounted; he followed, a step behind. At the door, however, she paused. He could hear her breath coming in quick gasps.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Nothing, nothing; only I am afraid."

She stooped; there was a grating sound, a click and the door opened. Carrington was a man of courage, but he afterward confessed that it took all his nerve to force his foot across the threshold.

"Do not be frightened," she said calmly; "there is nothing here to frighten anyone but ghosts."

"Ghosts?"

"Yes."

"Have you brought me here to tell me a ghost story?" with an effort at lightness. What misery the girl's tones conveyed to his ears!

"The ghosts of things that ought to and should have been; are these not the most melancholy?" She pressed a button and flooded the hallway with light.

His keen eyes roved about, to meet nothing but signs of luxury. She led

him into the library and turned on the lights. Not a servant anywhere in sight; the great house seemed absolutely empty. Not even the usual cat or dog came romping inquisitively into the room. The shelves of books stirred his sense of envy; what a den for a literary man to wander in! There were beautiful marbles, splendid paintings, originals, too, for Carrington knew his art; taste and refinement visible everywhere.

He stood silently watching the girl as she took off her hat and carelessly tossed it on the reading-table. The Russian sables were treated with like indifference. The natural abundance of her hair amazed him; and what a figure, so elegant, so slender, yet so round! The girl, without noticing him, walked the length of the room and back several times. Once or twice she made a gesture. It was not addressed to him, but to some conflict going on in her mind.

Carrington sat down on the edge of a chair and fell to twirling his hat.

"I am wondering where I shall begin," she said.

Carrington turned down his coat collar; the action seemed to relieve him of the sense of awkwardness.

"Luxury!" she began, with a sweep of her hand that was full of majesty and despair. "Why have I chosen you out of all the thousands; why should I believe that my story should interest you? Well, little as I have seen of the world, I have learned that woman does not go to woman in cases such as mine is." And then pathetically: "I know no woman to whom I might go. Women are like daws; their sympathy comes but to peck. Do you know what it is to be alone in a city? The desert is not loneliness; it is only solitude. True loneliness is to be found only in great communities. To be without a single friend or confidant when thousands of beings move about you; to pour your sorrows into cold, unfeeling ears; to seek sympathy in blind eyes—that is loneliness. That is the loneliness that causes the heart to break."

Carrington's eyes never left hers; he was fascinated.

"Luxury!" she repeated bitterly. "Surrounding me with all a woman might desire—paintings that charm the eye, books that charm the mind, music that charms the ear. Money!"

"Philosophy in a girl!" thought Carrington. His hat became motionless.

"It is all a lie, a lie!" The girl struck her hands together, impotent in her wrath, as Dido might have struck hers when she heard that Æneas was dead.

It was done so naturally that Carrington, always the dramatist, made a mental note of the gesture.

"I was educated in Paris and Berlin; my musical education was completed in Vienna. Like all young girls with music-loving souls, I was something of a poet. I saw the beautiful in everything; sometimes the beauty existed only in my imagination. I dreamed; I was happy. I was told that I possessed a voice such as is given to but few. I sang before the Emperor of Austria at a private musical. He complimented me. The future was bright indeed. Think of it; at twenty I retained all my illusions! I am now twenty-three, and not a single illusion is left. I saw but little of my father and mother, which is not unusual with children of wealthy parents. The first shock that came was the knowledge that my mother had ceased to live with my father. I was recalled. There were no explanations. My father met me at the boat. He greeted my effusive caresses—caresses that I had saved for years!—with careless indifference. This was the second shock. What did it all mean? What had happened? Where was my mother? My father did not reply. When I reached home I found that all the servants I had known in my childhood days were gone. From the new ones I knew that I should learn nothing of the mystery which, like a pall, had suddenly settled down upon me."

She paused, her arms hanging listless at her sides, her gaze riveted upon a pattern in the rug at her feet. Car-

rington sat like a man of stone; her voice had cast a spell upon him.

"I do not know why I tell you these things; you are an absolute stranger. I know not whether I weary you or not. I do not care. Madness lay in silence. I had to tell someone. This morning I found out all. My mother left my father because he was—a thief!"

"A thief!" fell unconsciously from Carrington's lips.

"A thief, bold, unscrupulous; not the petty burglar—no. A man who has stolen funds trusted to him for years; a man who has plundered the orphan and the widow, the most despicable of all men. My mother died of shame, and I knew nothing. My father left last night for South America, taking with him all the available funds, leaving me a curt note of explanation. I have neither money, friends nor home. The papers as yet know nothing; but tomorrow, tomorrow! The banks have seized everything."

She continued with her story. Sometimes she was superb in her rage, at others abject in her misery. She seemed to pass through the whole gamut of passions.

And all this while it ran through Carrington's head—"What a scheme for a play! What a scheme for a play! What a voice!" He pitied the girl from the bottom of his heart; but what could he do for her other than offer cold sympathy? He was ill at ease in the face of this peculiar tragedy.

All at once the girl stopped and faced him. There was a smile on her lips, a smile that might be likened to a flash of sunshine on a wintry day. Directly this smile melted into a laugh, mellow, mischievous, reverberating.

Carrington sat up stiffly in his chair.

"I beg your pardon!" he said.

The girl sat down before a small writing-table. She searched among some papers and finally found what she sought.

"Mr. Carrington, all this has been in very bad taste; I frankly confess it.

July 1905

There are two things you can do: leave the house in anger or remain to forgive me this imposition."

"I fail to understand," he said, his anger coming to the surface.

"I have deceived you."

"You have lured me here by a trick? You have played upon my sympathies to gratify—?"

"Wait a moment," she said proudly, her rich blood mantling her cheeks.

"A trick, it is true; but there are extenuating circumstances. What I have told you *has* happened, only it was not yesterday nor the day before. Please remain seated till I have done. I *am* poor; I *was* educated in the cities I named; I have to earn my living."

She rose and came over to his chair. She gave him a letter.

"Read this; you will understand."

Carrington experienced a mild chill; he saw his own handwriting. He extracted the letter from the envelope and read with some shame:

MISS CHALLONER—I have neither the time nor the inclination to bother with amateur actresses.

RICHARD CARRINGTON.

"It was scarcely polite, was it?" she asked, with a tinge of irony. "It was scarcely diplomatic, either, you will admit. I simply asked you for work. Surely, an honest effort to obtain employment ought not to be met with insolence."

He stared dumbly at the evidence in his hand.

"For weeks I have tried to get a hearing. Manager after manager I sought; all refused to see me; I have suffered affronts silently. Your manager I saw, but he referred me to you. I could never find you. But I was determined. So I wrote; that was your answer. I confess that for a time I was very angry, for courtesy is a simple thing and within reach of everyone."

To receive a lesson in manners from a young woman is not a very pleasant experience; but Carrington was a thorough gentleman, and he submitted meekly.

"I know that you are a busy man,

that you are besieged with applications. You ought, at least, to have formal slips printed, such as editors use. I have confidence in my ability to act, the confidence which talent gives to all persons. After receiving your letter I was more than ever determined to see you. So I resorted to this subterfuge. It was all very distasteful to me; but there is a vein of wilfulness in me. This is not my home. It is the home of a friend who was kind enough to turn it over to me this night, relying upon my wit to bring about this meeting."

"It was very neatly done," was Carrington's comment. He was not angry now at all. In fact, the girl interested him hugely. "I am rather curious to learn how you went about it."

"You are not angry?"

"I was."

This seemed to satisfy her.

"Well, first I learned where you were in the habit of dining. All day long a messenger has been following you. A telephone brought me to the restaurant. The rest you know. It was simple."

"Very simple," laconically.

"You listened and believed. I have been watching you. You believed everything I have told you. You have even been calculating how this scene might go into a play. Have I convinced you that I have the ability to act?"

Carrington folded the letter and balanced it on his palm.

"You fooled me completely; that ought to be sufficient recommendation."

"Thank you." But her eyes were eager with anxiety.

"Miss Challoner, I apologize for this letter. I do more than that. I promise not to leave this house till you agree to call at the theatre at ten tomorrow morning." He was smiling, and Carrington had a pleasant smile. He had an idea besides. "Good fortune put it into my head to follow you here. I see it all now, quite plainly. I am in a peculiar difficulty, and I honestly believe that you can help me out of it. How long would it take you to learn a leading part? In fact, the principal part?"

"A week."

"Have you had any experience?"

"A short season out West in a stock company."

"Good!"

"And I love the work."

"Do not build any great hopes," he warned; "for your chance all depends upon the whim of another woman. But you have my word and good offices that something shall be put in your way. You will come at ten?" putting on his gloves.

"Promptly."

"I believe that we both have been wise tonight; though it is true that a man dislikes being a fool and having it made manifest."

"And how about the woman scorned?" with an enchanting smile.

"It is kismet," he acknowledged.

"What a find!" thought Carrington jubilantly, on his way downtown.

"There is, after all, nothing like persistence," mused the girl. "It was much easier than I thought it would be."

Which proved that she had not nearly so much vanity as is usually accorded to woman.



IN SOCIETY

MRS. HAYNE—Isn't that your child?

MRS. PAYNE—I shouldn't wonder; there is something strangely familiar about the nurse.

A SIREN IN ARCADIA

By Margret Temple

MARJORIE stood eying ruefully the flaunting sign over the little station.

"Arcadia!" she said to herself contemptuously. "Was there ever such an incongruous name—such an absurd, impossible, ridiculous name for such a place?"

Her little red lip twisted itself into a disapproving pout as she gathered up her suit-case and parasol and box of candy and four magazines, and dragged them over to the door of the station. Then she gave a gigantic sigh.

A man thrust his head out of the operator's window.

"Are ye waitin' fer anyone, miss?" he asked genially.

Marjorie looked up at him with a confiding smile. The soft, yellow hair blew against her little flower face, and the brown eyes—big and round as a child's—interrogated him helplessly. She poured out her tale of woe in plaintive, heavily emphasized sentences.

"My brother promised to meet me," she said tragically. "He said the six forty-five, I know. And this is the right station; the rifle range is here, isn't it?"

"Three miles?" She dropped her suit-case and stared at him in comic dismay. "Three miles! Why, what am I to do? I can't walk, and there doesn't seem to be anything here." She cast a disdainful glance about her.

The man, deeming the situation one of dire need, got up and shuffled out to the platform.

"There's a hotel up there," he remarked suggestively, with a comprehensive sweep of his arm.

"But I can't stay in a strange place all night—alone!" She uttered the last word with accents of horror.

"Ye might get old man Dean ter let ye hev a rig o' some sort." He made a sudden spasmodic grab for her suit-case and started off. "You come along with me," he advised in a fatherly tone, "and I'll see what we kin do. It's no time for the likes of you"—with an admiring and protective glance—"to be straying around loose. If I was yer brother I'd 'a' been meeting you, sure enough, blamed ef I wouldn't! Come to think of it, though, a lot of the boys went up today. Likely he was one of the bunch."

Marjorie smiled confidently.

"No, indeed! He wrote me to be here today. He is to stay on to look after the camp and turn the property over. You see, the other regiment won't be down for two weeks or more."

"Well, I spec's ye're all right. I hear they left one officer and some men behind. Ye just walk in now and set a spell; I'll hustle up the old man. This is our hotel," he explained with some pride as he lifted the rope slipped over the gate-post and hospitably ushered her in.

The "hotel" was a ghastly, orange-colored house, with a little sweep of lawn at the side and an apology for a porch fronting on the highway.

Marjorie suddenly felt a wave of desolation sweep over her. She followed her guide into a dark, vault-like parlor and settled in a heap on one of the slippery horsehair chairs. There were two pictures on the wall: one of Pharaoh's horses and the other of Abraham Lincoln.

After an interminable wait her accommodating friend returned, saying cheerily:

"Ye're all right, miss. The old man will fix ye up. I've got to leave ye; there's no one to tend the station. Thank ye, miss; see yer again. Get the lieutenant to bring ye in and show ye the town." He shook her small hand limply and went out, each limb seeming to shamble a different way, as if the joints had not been properly secured.

Marjorie looked up with her engaging smile at the old man.

"Can you let me have some kind of a trap?" she asked in her purring little voice. "It's getting so late, and I must get out to camp. I am Lieutenant Carr's sister. Perhaps you know my brother?"

"Sure!" Dean answered, with quick reassurance. "He came here wantin' rooms, but when he found he was a-goin' to stay in camp he decided to take you there. Yes, 'um, I know the lieutenant, and a fine fellow he is, too. You just follow me."

Marjorie, radiant with relief, gathered up her numerous belongings and stepped daintily out to the gate. The sky was overcast; and a cool, strong wind swept the dust along the road, where a rickety buggy with one weary horse stood waiting.

Mr. Dean stowed her things in the back and helped her in.

"I wisht I could hev sent a man with you," he drawled apologetically; "but this is a holiday, you know, and they are all out. You can manage old Spot all right, though; just give her her head, and keep the flies off of her and she'll take you straight. No, don't bother to send the rig back; one of the boys will bring it in in the morning. You'd better travel along right smart, fer it looks like we were a-goin' to have some rain. Just keep to the road till you reach the camp; you can't miss it."

Marjorie thanked him as cheerfully as she could and gathered the reins up in her slim hands.

Twilight was hugging the world in

her shadowy arms and black, bulgy clouds hung low in the sky. There was a sweet dampness in the air that promised showers.

She put up one hand and, taking out her hat-pin, took her hat off, pinning it deftly to the seat. She ran her fingers through the soft fall of golden hair on her forehead. The wind caught it and blew it out like a veil. It was a cool wind, redolent with the perfume of mown meadows.

Marjorie's eyes rested gratefully on the wheat-fields stretching in delicious golden greens to right and left, the tasseled heads of the grain bowed in stately courtesy. The valley lay girdled by its blue mountains like an emerald in a turquoise ring. There was no sound save the faint, sweet tinkle of homing cow-bells, the familiar "croak, croak" of hoarse frogs, the twittered good nights of mating birds. The country was going to sleep, and it was barely sundown.

Marjorie half closed her eyes in a dreamy ecstasy. The reins slipped through her careless fingers; she threw her head back to catch the full play of the riotous wind.

Suddenly there was a threatening rumble overhead, a hoarse roar of anger, and, like a regiment of artillery unloading its batteries, the thunder tumbled across the sky. The wind sprang to meet it with ready haste. A jagged black pall hung threateningly in the west, impenetrable, forbidding. Fiercely it crushed out the faint color of the sunset, falling like the curtain in a theatre. A few moments of indecision; a patter of big raindrops and an ominous quiet, and then the heavens were torn open by a flash of lightning, and the storm burst!

The rain swept downward in gray sheets; the wind beat and tore at the branches of the trees, hurling them angrily to the earth. Marjorie crouched in the bottom of the buggy, hanging desperately to the reins and urging the bewildered horse forward.

She crouched and screamed at every poniard of lightning as it pierced the sky and glanced off in fantastic zig-

zags. She had no idea where she was. The mare was stretching her long gaunt legs and flying through the blinding rain with the dilapidated old buggy swaying after her. The darkness grew more oppressive; the road was soggy with water, and the wind almost tore her from the buggy. The old mare suddenly turned a corner without slacking her terrified rush, and Marjorie, flung forward on the dashboard, saw faint specks of white piercing the trees to the left. It was the camp.

She gave a little hysterical gasp of relief and tried to push the wet hair out of her eyes. The road grew rougher and the dripping tree branches slapped her viciously in the face. The mare dragged along more slowly, and at last stopped. Marjorie, half blinded, saw that they were facing a gateway, with a barbed wire fence on either side. Swaying tents sprang up ghost-like, peeping from the shadows. She stood up and, making a little pipe of her hands, called frantically again and again; but the wind tore her voice from her lips and carried it away to die in the uproar. There was no sign of any living thing.

Clinging desperately to the seat, she managed to climb to the ground, and staggering in her heavy dripping skirts to the gate, she shook it helplessly. At last her voice, high and clear, rang above the storm.

A man came stumbling over the rough ground, his hat pulled down over his eyes. He fumbled with the gate a moment and then pulled it open with a wrench. Something precipitated itself against him; something wet and soft and clinging.

"The devil!" he said explosively.

But a faint voice from somewhere answered weakly: "No it's not——"

"Merciful heavens!"

"Please let me in," came the tremulous plea. "I am all wet and tired and my horse is almost dead, and I want someone to find my brother."

Two damp hands groped toward him, and in the half-darkness the man looked into the sweetest face he had

ever seen, a face all wet and pale, with tangled hair framing it severely.

"For heaven's sake, who is your brother?" he gasped in ludicrous bewilderment.

"Lieutenant Carr. Please call him. I want to get in."

"Carr's sister! Good Lord!"

He stared at her blankly.

The petulant lips began to quiver and a flush sprang to her cheeks.

"Please let me in." There was impatience and a little hauteur in her voice. "Later you can find out who I am and continue your exclamations."

The flash of her eye he missed in the darkness; but her tone brought him to his senses. His startled eyes sought her small figure, weighed down with the drenched clothing. He caught her by the arm.

"It's just a yard or two," he gasped. "Do you think you can make it? Be careful; don't stumble. Why, you are wet through!"

"I should think I am," she snapped petulantly. "I stood there and soaked while you were indulging in your 'Good heavens!' and 'O Lords!' and— Please call my brother."

"One moment. Come in here." He lifted the flap of a large tent and she felt her way inside.

"Can you find this camp-stool?" he asked. "Here, let me help."

His big hands groped for her in the darkness, and two little, clutching, confiding ones met them. He led her in the darkness to the tiny stool.

"Will you be afraid to sit here until I get a lamp?"

"Afraid?" she answered, with fine scorn. "I am not afraid of anything." She gasped as the tent-flap fell behind him.

The tent-poles were swaying wildly, and the frail ropes groaned with every tug of the wind. She tried to wring some of the water out of her skirt with her small cold hands. She felt up her sleeve for her handkerchief, and wiped her face and hair. Her heart was beating hotly. Everything had gone wrong. She was a small neglected atom, sitting alone in this flimsy tent,

with the storm sweeping the world outside. She wanted someone to speak to her. She would probably catch her death of cold; then, perhaps, Jack would be sorry he had neglected and ill-treated her. Already she had a dreadful pneumonic feeling in her back. But someone was coming with a lamp. She sprang up and ran joyfully to the opening.

"Jack!" she cried in a relieved voice. But with a sudden change of face and tone she said coldly: "I thought it was my brother. Where is he?"

The man did not answer immediately. He came in and set the lamp on a small board table before he faced her.

He was courteous, even apologetic; she was angry, impatient, distrustful. Her big eyes sought his, and in the clear light she looked older and very stately.

"Will you kindly tell me," she asked again, in her velvety, even voice, "where my brother is? This is the rifle range, is it not?"

Her lids were half closed, and she was measuring him under them.

"Yes."

"Well, then—" she paused expectantly; but he was silent. "Why don't you speak?" she demanded, with a wilful stamp of her foot. "Why do you stand there looking like a brigand? I haven't fallen into a den of thieves, have I? Please tell me at once where my brother is?"

"He left with the troops this morning!" he said slowly.

Marjorie stared at him for a moment in dumb amazement.

"What!" she stammered hotly. "I don't believe you."

"It is true," he replied simply, not looking at her. "I feel worse than you do. I realize fully what a position it places you in; but there is no way out of it. Carr had a telegram from the colonel ordering him to the garrison. Your telegram did not arrive until after he had gone. He had not the faintest idea you would be down this evening. We can fix you up very comfortably for the night, and in the morning——"

"The night! Do you expect me to stay here all night without my brother?"

"The camp is perfectly safe," he told her haltingly. "You cannot go out in the storm."

"I can and will!" She looked at him with defiance, her head thrown up like a thoroughbred ready to bolt. There was every indication of everlasting warfare in her attitude. In spite of it she seemed such a child—her small, delicate head barely reaching his shoulder—that the man could not suppress a smile. She saw it with inward fury, and walked haughtily to the door.

"I wish to get my horse," she said coldly as she passed.

He stepped forward to bar her progress.

"It is not possible for you to go out in the storm." He put out protective arms. "I will not permit it!"

"You will not permit it?" She laughed sardonically. "Has anyone given you the leave to permit or not to permit?"

"No, but as a friend of your brother——"

"Are you a friend of my brother?" she asked insolently.

The hot blood sprang to his face, and he drew himself up like the soldier he was, his magnificent head grazing the roof of the tent.

Marjorie looked at him furtively. From his bearing and demeanor she judged he was an officer; but he did not compare favorably with the gold-laced, brass-buttoned image her imagination had pictured as typically martial. A blue chambray shirt, very wet, was belted into khaki riding-breeches, and they in turn were stuffed into mud-bespattered boots. He was very thin, but proportioned like an athlete, with no superfluous flesh to bear a horse to the ground, yet with the strength of a demon lying dormant in the wiry frame.

"I have no intention of molesting you in any way, Miss Carr," he said as he looked full in her eyes. She seemed about to speak at the mention

of the name, but checked herself. "Or of thrusting myself upon you, but I cannot allow you to brave a storm that I would not turn a dog loose in."

"Well, you will have to treat me worse than you would treat a dog; for I am going back to the hotel tonight."

"Hush! Listen!" He held up his hand to silence her, and the terrifying sounds of the furious tempest were borne to them. Broken twigs were flung tempestuously against the tent. The wind tore at the ropes, pulling and tugging like a human hand, momentarily imperiling the frail structure, and roll after roll of thunder rumbled across the heavens.

He looked significantly into her eyes.

"Do you still insist on attempting it?" he asked, almost smiling.

The smile lashed her calming anger into fury. She threw back her head with a superb gesture.

"I am not afraid to!"

"Then you are extremely foolish."

Their eyes clashed like drawn swords.

"I am not afraid of being foolish either. Allow me to pass, please."

"No."

"Would you hold me here by force?"

"Yes, if it is necessary."

"I beg you to remember that I am a stranger to you, and a woman. I dislike to remind you that courtesy to women——"

"There are times when courtesy ceases to be a virtue."

As he spoke she darted suddenly past him and laid her hand on the flap of the tent.

"One moment——!"

"Do not touch me! You must see I cannot stay here. I won't! I don't care what happens!"

A sharp flash of lightning made her cower; but she struggled to undo the wet ropes with her trembling fingers.

"Let me out!"

"No!" He laid a detaining hand on her arm.

"How dare you touch me! Take your hand off! I will go."

At her words, as if the very heavens protested, a shaft of lightning blazed white and hot in the night, and then the thunder followed—awful, violent, stupendous.

The tent swayed cruelly, the ropes singing with the strain, and there was the sound of falling timber outside.

With a smothered exclamation, Adrian brushed past the girl and rushed into the night. The wind beat him almost to the earth. He stumbled toward the ropes, feeling blindly for the slack. The guys were wet and slipped through his nervous hands. There was a sudden, swift loosening of the rope in his hands; the canvas flapped in agony. Like a flash he made for the entrance, calling loudly to the girl; but she made no answer. With a wild flapping of helpless white wings, with an almost human protest and struggle, the ropes gave and the tent, tottering, fell to the earth. It lay like a great bird fluttering helplessly.

Adrian, carried down with the wreck, could see nothing. As he struggled to his feet he began tearing madly at the heap of canvas. He could hear no sound from beneath; but his own voice was scarcely audible above the din of the storm.

At last a lantern flickered in the gloom and two enlisted men came running toward him.

"For God's sake, sir, what's happened!"

"Lend a hand here, O'Riley. The tent's down."

Struggling, pulling, straining in the darkness, they raised the fallen canvas, and underneath lay a pathetic white heap. A pale, wet cheek touched the rude boards; two small, white hands clutched the broken camp-stool.

"Sure, an' it's kilt she is entorely," cried one of the men, with a hysterical Irish wail.

"Shut up, can't you!" snarled the other sharply as Adrian, with blanched face, knelt and reverently raised the childish form. The rain was beating down upon it relentlessly.

"Ye can take 'er to the mess 'll,

sorr. Faith, 'tis the only safe place. The tents are screechin' like divils, and the Blessed Virgin 'erself couldn't kape thim up. 'Ere, give me the lantern, man. This way, sorr. Sure, an' it's the ol' man himself's turned loose this noight."

Adrian stumbled blindly along over the wet grass, the wind struggling to tear his burden from his arms. It was only a few steps to the rude boarded-in structure set apart for the officers' mess. The floor was a pool of water. There were two long tables and some benches. He laid the girl on one of these and said in the nervous whisper used in the presence of disaster:

"Send me that hospital-corps man, and tell Corporal Grier to put one of the small tents up in here."

He turned again to the girl, trying to shelter her from the driving rain. Her pure, pale face shone like a pearl in the shadow, and the wet lashes lay like black curtains over her eyes. Her youth and sweetness brought the man to his knees. He knelt silently, and taking one of the frail hands in his big brown ones, chafed it tenderly. As the satin flesh touched his, something stirred in his heart, something new and strange. As he looked, he seemed to see the fulfilment of dreams that had lured him in the shadows of hope—dreams of a woman strong, true and tender.

Adrian's thoughts were interrupted by the hospital man, who came in breathlessly. At a look from Adrian he knelt by the little figure and laid his hand on the heart.

"I think she has only fainted, sir," he said encouragingly; "the breath knocked out of her by the fall. I've got some aromatic spirits here and—"

When Marjorie came back from dreamland, her wondering eyes traveled to the roof of the tiny white tent over her, and then, with a gasp, to the weather-beaten face of a woman, a woman past middle life, with big patient eyes and a helpful mouth.

Marjorie smiled a little, lazy, happy smile and did not try to speak.

Through the storm Adrian had ridden to a neighboring farm and sought help which he knew would soothe her. Marjorie had forgotten all about him; she only felt a lightness in her head and a sense of rest.

All through the night the storm raged in fury, and in the morning the sun rose somberly on a devastated country. Far and near lay the broken, crushed branches of the trees. Ruts and gullies ran with water. Pathetic little bird-nests lay scattered on the drenched, beaten grass.

The morning brought many things for Marjorie. One was a blessed telegram from her brother. It said simply:

Wait for me. Will be down on the 6.45 this evening.

"The lieutenant rode in for it himself," explained her gaunt nurse, "and he says if you're feeling pert enough this morning to get up, why, there'll be breakfast in that big tent over yander—and I've got all your clothes dry and your satchel here." She dragged in the suit-case.

Marjorie smiled as she saw it.

"I think I'll get up," she yawned lazily. "And, Mrs. White, do you think you could find me a mirror anywhere—for heaven's sake, don't ask him for it! See if the soldiers haven't one. Men evidently don't think it necessary to beautify themselves in camp."

Adrian was pacing up and down in front of the big hospital tent, where the morning meal was spread. He was wondering desperately if she would forgive him for last night. One moment he was soaring in the clouds, another, kicking the clods of the unromantic earth.

After a while—a long, long while by his little wrist watch—the flaps of the tent were slowly lifted, and an angel walked out—an angel in a white skirt and a white shirt-waist. She was smiling as she stepped gaily out into the sunshine. She stopped when she saw Adrian, and, assuming a very severe expression, drew herself

up to her full height and walked disdainfully over to the tent. The poor, miserable thing waiting there watched her appealingly.

"Good morning! I trust you are better," he ventured anxiously.

"I am quite well, thank you."

Adrian pulled out a chair. "Will you sit here?"

"Thank you, I prefer this seat."

"But that is in the sun."

"I like the sun."

"I am afraid you will be sunburned."

"I never burn."

The angel, sheathing her wings, fluttered into the lucky old chair, and, with an impulse of wilfulness, reached up for the fluffy hat.

"Don't take that off," he begged impulsively.

"Why not?" She turned severely questioning eyes on him.

"I—don't know," he stammered lamely, "but—I—it looks bully nodding that way."

"If it looks 'bully' I shall remove it." Her tone was glacial.

Adrian stood reddening, too deeply injured to move.

The delight of repaying him for his victory of last night quickened her pulses. She smiled, and her smile was tinged with triumph. She looked from under her drooped lashes at her prey.

"Do you know," she remarked sweetly, "that you look for all the world like a waiter, standing with that receptive expression. I can imagine your saying superbly: 'Demi-tasse, ma'am?'"

Adrian made her a low bow.

"Will you?" he asked, lifting the huge coffee-pot invitingly.

Marjorie permitted herself a laugh.

"Considering that we have only these giant cups—no!"

That "we" delighted him.

"Well, let me fill a giant for you."

She grew austere again.

"Thank you." She accepted the cup primly.

He watched her in silence for some moments. Then, looking away, he said in an embarrassed way:

"I regret very deeply that I was forced to offend you last night, but you must see now——"

"I see now," she interrupted, "the way I saw last night."

"I would do anything to repair," he continued, "to apologize."

"There are some things past repair," she replied, with a stony glance.

"Is that one of them?"

Marjorie remarked icily that she did not care to discuss the question.

"But if we do not discuss," pleaded logical man, "we will never reach any conclusion."

"Is it necessary that we should reach a conclusion?"

"Necessary to me," he said earnestly.

She arose from the table and took her hat.

"Are you going?"

"I have finished."

"So have I," he affirmed, with a fine disregard for truth. "Let me take you out and show you the targets."

She shook her head.

"There is a creek behind the camp where there are no end of violets," he urged.

"How far is it, and how wet is it?" She was weakening.

"Not far. I'll get Mrs. White to put us up a bit of lunch, and we'll take the poles and fish."

"But we have no chaperon," she protested.

"They are not used in this country," he answered, and his eyes sought hers appealingly.

"It is a most disreputable country, then," she assured him.

"Don't be hard on it. Let us enjoy today!"

For the first time Marjorie was kind. She looked at him tantalizingly from under her shadowy lashes, with ensnaring innocence in her eyes.

"Just today," she assented lightly, "and after that——"

"The morrows can take care of themselves," he finished joyfully.

But to herself she said, with almost a sigh, "There will be no tomorrow."

And, with a half-furtive glance at

him, she slipped a ring from her finger and dropped it into the little silver purse that hung at her waist.

All that day they spent together, wandering through the scented woods, hanging over great shady pools where the derisive fish, lying securely and happily in the shadows of the rocks, scorned their tempting bait. Marjorie's sweet, laughing face and her sunshiny hair blurred against his in the placid waters and the reflected branches bound them together in the picture. The birds, calling to their mates, trilled out their passionate, pure notes of love until the forest, like a harp of many strings, trembled ecstatically.

Adrian's dazzled eyes ever sought the face beside him, striving to meet those laughing eyes with the promise of passion in their depth; but Marjorie, with persistent wilfulness, would not look at him. Like two sensitive strings, which have felt the same vibration, they were trembling fearfully on the brink of a discord.

The woman had not dared to let down the mantle of reserve which she had held relentlessly between them, and, as they turned home toward evening, a silence fell. It was a silence fraught with meaning. Love was walking like a shadow undiscovered between them, endeavoring to be noticed.

An exultant light lay trembling in the woman's innocent eyes, so persistently hidden.

The peace of evening came slowly. The trees assumed fantastic, shadowy shapes and the perfume that the sun had squeezed out of shrub and flower lay heavy in the air.

Marjorie paused a minute as they neared the end of the wood, and lifted her face to catch the faint breeze. As she did so Adrian uttered an exclamation, and touched her on the arm.

She turned and followed his eyes. On the ground at their feet lay a battered old straw hat, and snugly built into its crown was a bird's nest.

With exquisite care the tiny home had been built of bits of string and old sticks, rags and shriveled leaves, gathered by small, industrious home-makers. Not far off lay the builders. Crushed and flung aside by the storm, their busy little hearts had been stilled before they had finished their home. Marjorie, taking the tiny feathered mother in her hands, softly laid her in the nest. Her face was Madonna-like.

"Poor little things!" she whispered sympathetically. "Oh, that dreadful old storm!" she added viciously.

Adrian smiled.

"You were terribly anxious last night to share the fate of the birds."

"That is a forbidden subject," she said; and then, as he stood silently looking at her, she flushed and turned her eyes from him.

"See how hard these little fellows worked to build their house," he mused, fingering the nest with his big hands. "I would work just as hard if I had a—mate."

For the first time in her gay, reckless life she was fearful and embarrassed in the presence of a man.

He looked down upon her with a sort of dominating strength in his grave eyes.

"Do you know," he said, with a wistful wonder in his tones, "from the moment last night when I opened the gate to let you in, all wet and helpless, I opened the gate of my heart, too. I can never close it—oh, I know I have only known you a day! But love does not reckon days. I don't expect anything—how could I? You are not the girl to give your love for the asking; but there is no effort I would not make, no hardship I would not undergo to win you."

He bent nearer and took her small, trembling hand in his. "I want these little hands," he said slowly, "to help me build my home."

With a little half-sob Marjorie turned to him.

"Don't," she said faintly. "Don't say any more!"

With an impassioned gesture she

put her hands on his chest and looked up into his face. Hers was white and her eyes were big and wondering.

"Is this love?" she whispered. "Tell me! Is this love?"

"What else!" he answered, closing his hands over hers as they lay against him. "Feel my heart beat at your touch, O beloved! I have not loved you just today, but always. I have been waiting for you."

"Don't say any more"—she struggled to draw away her hands—"for I am afraid to hear!"

"Why afraid?"

"Oh, because it is all so sweet!" she said desperately. "I cannot listen. I have never wanted any man's love before, and now—now——"

Pulling her hands from him and dropping on a log, she turned her face slowly away. He saw that she was crying. He stood watching her in helpless anguish, and then with sudden passion he fell beside her and prisoned her with his great arms.

"Tell me what makes you cry," he begged. "Tell me what you mean, child. Don't turn away; speak to me!"

Slowly, with trembling fingers, Marjorie, white and wan, opened the little silver purse and held the plain gold ring out to him in her open palm.

"I am bound," she cried, with a hysterical sob, her voice ringing like a moan through the still forest. "Oh, I am punished for everything I have ever done!"

The man stood staring at the small gold circlet in her hand. At last he gave a short laugh, and she trembled as she heard it. Clenching her hands together, the ring fell unheeded to the ground. After a moment she said slowly:

"I took it off for fun, because—well, I saw you; I thought you liked me—that you took me for a girl, and to pay you for having your way last night I deceived you. I never dreamed that this day would mean so much—just one day out of a life—and when you spoke it all came to me, all, all, all. Do you understand? I realized that everything else in life

had been paste. Love had never meant much to me: I could not understand. I thought I had felt all I would ever feel, but now——"

She flung out her hands and he caught them in his, crushing them in his pain.

"And I have lost you!" he said in the tone a man uses in the presence of death. "This day is all I get out of life, just a day—a dream, a fantasy——"

"A better day than many a man's lifetime," she said passionately. She stooped and picked the ring from the ground.

"If I could in honor take it off," she whispered, with drooped lids. Like a demon temptation gripped him. "Love is everything. Take her to yourself though you crush a hundred hearts to do it. She is yours, fashioned by God for you. Do not let her go. Take her." Madly he put out his hands, but they fell helplessly. He hid his face with a groan, for honor had crept spectre-like between.

She rose slowly and slipped the ring back into its place on her hand.

"I have done a wicked thing," she whispered faintly. "My impulses are all wrong, I am afraid of myself sometimes. I am married to a good man, a noble man. I pray God I may never cause him a pang." And her voice rang true. "This day is ours. Just a little sunshine to make the years possible. We will keep it together, you and I. When I took that ring off, I thought that we would be nothing to each other. It was an impulse of coquetry. Please believe me, I am not so bad—just foolish. I was married too young; but let me keep honor with me. I have nothing else. Our ways lie far apart; but your name will always mean to me just——"

Her voice broke, and he knelt and pressed her cold, trembling hands to his wet eyelids.

"Love," he finished reverently, "love——!"

That night, when Marjorie met her brother, he held her long in his arms.

looking with intense pity in her small face—her face, with its alluring dimpled beauty, its soft feminine charm. He did not know her, close as he was to her. He had not fathomed her nature. She was but a fantastic butterfly, flitting now and then into his life.

He trembled now as he looked into her big, childish eyes, in them the promises that had deceived so many men.

"Marjorie," he began. Then she saw the fluttering yellow message in his hand, and he told her—told her blunderingly, haltingly, without preparation, as men will.

Blinded, stunned, bereft, she stood. The world went around, the light was blotted out, and the ground gave under her feet. One wild cry after another burst from her pallid lips. She was

like a mad thing, her light brain tottering.

When Adrian, with the tenderness of strong compassion, came to her, she beat him off like a demon.

"My husband is dead," she wailed wildly; "he is dead, dead, dead! No one will take me to him. No one cares— How dare you touch me! I love him——!"

The man's face was terrible.

"And I?" he asked, fixing dazed eyes upon her.

She laughed hysterically and pushed him from her.

"You!" she cried shrilly. "You— you poor fool! I was playing with you." She flung herself to the floor in mad abandonment, her fair head striking on the rough boards. "God has punished me," she moaned desperately, "He has punished me!"



THE STATE OF AFFAIRS

"A H! how are you, Landlord?" saluted the patent-churn man as he entered the tavern at Polkville, Ark. "How are you, and how are things in general?"

"Ho, there! 'Round again, I see!" genially returned the host. "Me? Aw, I'm sorter moderate, thank ye! As for things in town here—well, things is lively; livelier than a gooseberry merchant sellin' 'em a berry at a time. We've got a guessin' contest on hand between this town and Torpidville, over which needs a new operry house the worst and which won't get it first. And a feller that was in love, or something that-a-way, tried to commit suicide the other day, right in front of the post-office, by bombardin' his head with a pistol; shot four times, but he was havin' a chill just then and shook so's he didn't hit himself. The public library announces the followin' new and interestin' books: Mrs. Sigourney's Poems, 'Little Lord Fauntleroy' and Sut Lovengood's last work. There was a tollable lively fight at the revival last—well, I forget just what night it was. And we have an otherwise-worthy lady who is all puffed up with pride b'cuz while she was away visitin' she saw a century-plant in full bloom; and all the rest of our wives, speakin' in round numbers, are dead set to go visitin' too—and several of their husbands have had to whip the century-plant woman's husband on account of it. Eh-yah! Things is pretty blamed lively here in Polkville, lemme just tell you!"

TOM P. MORGAN.



A DVICE is cheap until you begin to follow it.

THE MARTYR OF THE SUBURBS

By Gelett Burgess

WHEN Maysie comes to town, there's always something doing;
 'Twould take a dozen men to tell it all—
A little bit of shopping and a little bit of wooing,
 A dinner and a supper and a call.
The neighbors in New Jersey call her innocent and prim,
 They laugh at her, to every country clown;
Her ways are of the oddest, but her manners always modest—
 It's different when Maysie comes to town.

When Maysie comes to town, she telegraphs to Willie;
 He meets her at the ferry with a cab.
Their actions and their persiflage you might consider silly,
 But no one in New York is keeping tab.
The neighbors in New Jersey think she never was in love,
 She's timid, and she wears a quiet gown;
Her ways are all discreetness and her smile is simple sweetness—
 It's different when Maysie comes to town.

When Maysie comes to town, she telephones to Harry
 To meet her after Willie's disappeared;
She gracefully eludes his importunities to marry,
 She drinks a dry Martini, and is cheered.
The neighbors in New Jersey see no men who come to call,
 (Though the postman stops at Maysie's with a frown).
Poor Maysie's "literary"; she's considered sober, very—
 It's different when Maysie comes to town.

When Maysie comes to town, she has to call on Walter;
 His studio's a cozy place for tea;
She has a cigarette or two, and Maysie doesn't falter
 At just a friendly kiss or two—or three.
The neighbors in New Jersey think her quite too shy for men,
 In passing them she casts her lashes down;
She goes alone to lectures and awakens no conjectures—
 It's different when Maysie comes to town.

When Maysie comes to town, the hansom-drivers hail her,
 The waiters always know her and are kind;
When Maysie leaves the city then a dozen men bewail her,
 But Maysie'll come again, so never mind!
The neighbors in New Jersey, when she reappears, sedate,
 Can see no sign in Maysie's eyes of brown;
She goes to song recitals and has books with learned titles—
 It's different when Maysie comes to town!

THE SLAIN ONES

WHAT of the gallant dead
 Borne from the field?
 Oh, the draped silent head,
 The empty shield!

Kiss the swift moveless feet
 That won their goal;
 Crown the unseeing brow,
 Joy to that deathless soul!

What of the gallant hearts
 Slain, that live on,
 Who eat their daily bread
 When joy is done?

Nay, not for them the wreath,
 The bugle's note;
 Theirs to taste morn and night
 The sword within their throat.

What of the gallant hearts
 Slain, that must live?
 God of the Shrouded Hands,
 Shall they forgive?

FLORENCE WILKINSON.



SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT

"DO you live up to your ideals?"
 "No; I am a married man—I live with my ordeal."



EXACTLY

SHE—It must be delightful living on a farm—everything so nice and fresh.
 HE—Especially the summer boarders.

A SAD MISTAKE

(WITH ASIDES)

By Tom Masson

SHE—You came on the morning train, didn't you? (As if I hadn't seen him through a spy-glass from my window!)

HE—Yes. (She's a dream!) Shall we walk down the beach, beyond the bathers?

SHE—If you like. (He's evidently not going to lose any time.) You came down over Sunday, I presume?

HE—(Well, I must make a start.) Yes, and I shall probably stay longer—that is, if I like it. (Here goes!) If there are inducements enough, I might stay longer.

SHE—(Nothing slow about him! I won't have to lead him on. He's conceited enough. My game is to be real coy and simple.) There are good fishing and sailing here. You swim, of course?

HE—(Now, is she so rural as that? I don't believe it.) Oh, yes, I swim. Do you?

SHE—No; I bathe.

HE—(Now I'll begin to be kind.) Oh, you must let me teach you how to swim. It's my specialty.

SHE—(I'll ask him a leading question.) Oh, so you've taught others, have you?

HE—(Just as I suspected—she's no fool.) Oh, yes—my sisters.

SHE—And your cousins and your aunts?

HE—(I must get on.) Yes—and girls—handsome girls, splendid girls. Why, I've taught girls almost as beautiful as you!

SHE—(Well! He knows a good thing when he sees it!) Indeed! Do

you know, if you weren't from the great city, I should begin to suspect that you were a flirt.

HE—I a flirt! Never! I've had no time, you know. (Here's a place where I'll tell her of my large interests.) I'm too busy to flirt. It's very seldom I can get away from my growing business long enough to have that sort of thing. I'd have to learn.

SHE—Why don't you get someone to teach you? (Now what'll he say?)

HE—I don't want to know. I don't believe in flirting.

SHE—(What's he driving at?) You'd rather fish, I suppose, or sail?

HE—No. (I wonder if this will annoy her any?) I'd rather make love—real, genuine love. Here's a good place. Shall we be seated?

SHE—If you like.

HE—This is a grand old rock, isn't it? Can anyone see us?

SHE—(I must show him he is too forward.) I should like to know, sir, what difference it makes whether anyone can see us or not? You are rather presuming, are you not? No, no one can see us.

HE—(I'll ignore her remark.) We are alone—at last. Did you understand what I just said—about flirting?

SHE—You said, I believe, that you didn't care for it. Neither do I.

HE—(Now is my time.) I hope, then, that you'll agree with me that real, genuine love is the only thing in the world. From the moment I saw you I loved you. (Good! She lets

me take her hand.) I believe, as truly as a man can, that there is such a thing as love at first sight. When the hotel clerk introduced us I felt that there was only one girl in all the world for me. (Really, I am beginning to believe what I am saying!) There is something about you, sweetheart, which I cannot quite define, but which leads me on and on. Life without you would henceforth be a blank. (Here's where I try to kiss her.)

SHE—Oh! (This is more than I bargained for.) You are too much in earnest.

HE—I cannot be too much in earnest with you. I love you! (Here's where I kiss her again.)

SHE—(Isn't he splendid?) You mustn't!

HE—(She's certainly the right sort.) Will you be my wife?

SHE—(The monster!) Your wife!

HE—Yes—I mean it.

SHE—Your wife! Aren't you married already?

HE—(Now, isn't that great?) I married! I should say not. Never!

SHE (*covering her face with her hands*)—How dreadful! They told me you were.



TO CERTAIN SUMMER GIRLS

O FAIR Belinda, do not pine,
O Una, don't despair;
Be patient, gentle Caroline,
Cheer up, angelic Claire.

Be not cast down, superb Elaine,
Be brave, alluring Nell;
Don't wring your hands, Matilda Jane,
Be calm, sweet Isobel.

Pray do not fancy hope is dead.
Be game, and laugh at fate.
Bear this in mind: they also wed
Who only wait and wait.

R. K. MUNKITTRICK.



A NECESSITY IN ST. PETERSBURG

FIRST RUSSIAN—Say, old man!

SECOND RUSSIAN—Well, what is it?

"Have you an extra bomb in your pocket? I left mine in my other clothes."



OF COURSE

DYER—Do you remember the name of the first talking-machine?
DUELL—Eve.

